

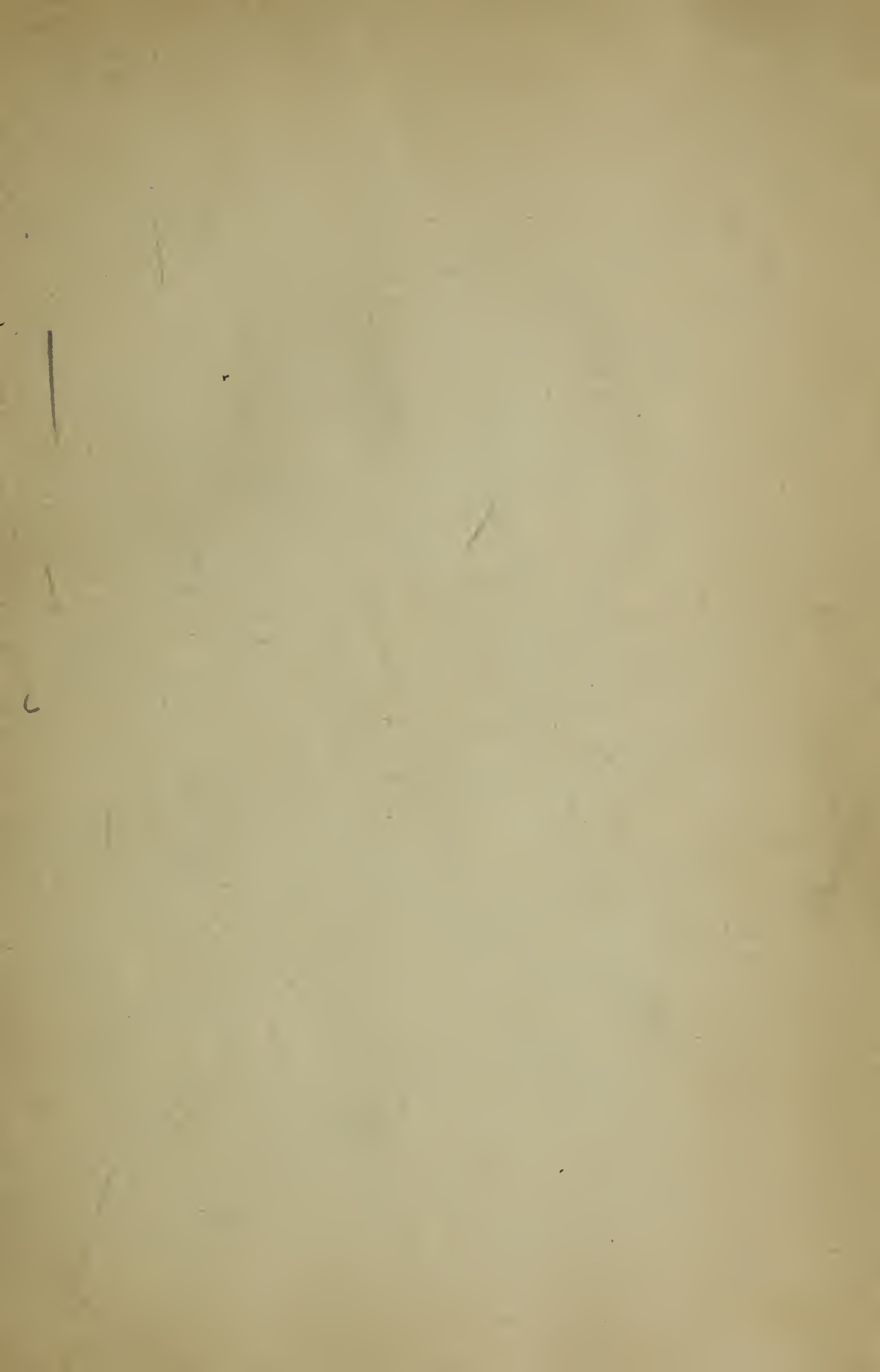
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The
ECLOGUES *of* VIRGIL
An English Version
by Samuel Palmer

AN
English Version
of
THE ECLOGUES OF
VIRGIL

By Samuel Palmer

With Illustrations by the AUTHOR

LONDON

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

ECLOGUE 1. (*Fac-simile of the drawing*) To face page 18

"O fortunate old man!

*Then these ancestral fields are yours again;
And wide enough for you. Though naked stone,
And marsh with slimy rush, about upon
The lowlands, yet your pregnant ewes shall try
No unproved forage; neighbouring flocks, too nigh,
Strike no contagion, nor infect the young:
O fortunate, who now at last, among
Known streams and sacred fountain-heads have found
A shelter and a shade on your own ground."*

ANOTHER VERSION. (*Reproduced from a copy of the water-colour drawing.*)

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ECLOGUE 1. (*Etching*) Page 22

*"Ripe apples are our supper, cream unstirr'd,
Boil'd chestnuts, plenty of the sweeten'd curd:
See, glimmering in the West, the homeward star;
And from the crest of upland towns afar,
The hearth-smoke rise; while gathering over all,
From the steep mountains greater shadows fall."*

ECLOGUE 2. (*Fac-simile of the drawing*) Page 30

*"But see, the weary-pacing oxen, slow,
Homeward from labour'd furrows bring the plough,
Sliding reversed, and the departing sun
Doubles the lengthening shades:—"*

- ECLOGUE 3. (*Fac-simile of the drawing*) Page 40

*"'Tis gentle Phillis I love best of all,
For when I left, some tears began to fall;
'Adieu!' she said, while her loose tresses fell
About me, 'Charming boy, a long farewell!'"*

- ECLOGUE 4. (*Fac-simile of the drawing*) Page 48

*"Thy very cradle quickens, osiers loose
To tendrils turn, with flowery shoots diffuse:
A softer couch the thymy ground puts forth,
Nor lavish blossom dreads the sudden North."*

- ECLOGUE 5. (*Etching*) Page 54

*"Untimely lost, and by a cruel death,
The Nymphs their Daphnis mourn'd with faltering breath.
O bowers of hazel, waters murmuring hoarse,
Ye heard that mother's cry: she, the dear corse
Embracing in a long, a last caress,
Planets and gods rebuked as pitiless."*

- ECLOGUE 6. (*Fac-simile of the drawing*) Page 64

*"—— till Vesper bade the swain
Number his flocks and stall them from the dew,
And then from the reluctant skies withdrew."*

- ECLOGUE 7. (*Fac-simile of the drawing*) Page 70

*"Come, fairest, if thou care for me at all;
Nor later than the pastured bulls to stall
Wind hitherward along the dewy glade,
Ere yet, afar, the rosy mountains fade."*

- ECLOGUE 8. (*Etching*) Page 76

*"Scarce with her rosy fingers had the dawn
From glimmering heaven the veil of night withdrawn,
And folded flocks were loose to browse anew
O'er mountain thyme or trefoil wet with dew,
When leaning sad an olive-stem beside,
There, his last numbers, hapless Damon plied."*

ECLOGUE 8. (*Etching*) Page 82

*“ And while the troubled moon shrunk in and set,
Th’ earth trembled, and the starless heaven was jet,
With such as I am crumbling in my hand,
Could he the sad and shadowy past command
At will, and while my senses crept with dread,
From a deep sepulchre call up the dead.”*

ECLOGUE 9. (*Etching*) Page 88

*“ Then, to our goats at milking time return
O’er breezy heather-bells and slopes of vine;
The cream-bowl set and in our cave recline,
(Its brows with poplar shaded, watch the West),
And timely, with the sun, together rest.”*

ECLOGUE 10. (*Fac-simile of the drawing*) Page 92

*“ Pan came, Arcadian tetrarch ever good;
I myself saw him, glowing as he stood,
With wall-wort berries, crimson’d like the West.”*

ANOTHER VERSION. (*Fac-simile of the drawing*) Page 94

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

IN publishing this version of Virgil's *Eclogues* and the accompanying designs, I wish to tell briefly how they were begun, how sedulously and slowly laboured, and how at last, when the hand that had wrought them so lovingly was in a few hours to be laid to rest, the task of giving them some measure of completeness was bequeathed to me. I will quote partly from the Memoir lately published.

An intense admirer of Virgil and finding in him "such a wealth of imagery and suggestion (in the latter comparable only with Milton) as would fill volumes," my father had begun while he lived in Kensington and probably about the year 1856, a paraphrase of the *Eclogues* in verse. It seemed to him "desirable that those who do not read them in the original should have some version from which the pastoral essence had not quite evaporated." "Whatever mine may be," he wrote, "it is a work done *con amore* in the superlative degree." Soon after he settled at Red Hill in 1861, it was taken up again and diligently pursued, especially when the long winter evenings afforded him those "sacred hours" which he delighted to dedicate to literature. His taste being very fastidious, it was long ere the paraphrase was fashioned quite to the author's mind, and it was not till 1872, when it was substantially finished, that he wrote as follows to Mr. Hamerton, with whom he had for some time corresponded on literary and artistic matters:—"I think it *extremely kind* that, with all your engagements you should sympathize with my Virgil project and wish to help me. I feel the more grateful, because, in matters of this brief life it is my sole remaining hobby. I had a stud of them once, before my dear accomplished son left us. It was begun with the advantage of his criticism—finished in sorrow."

Although Samuel Palmer did not originally intend to devote his pencil to Virgil as he had so assiduously devoted his pen, he had long seen a "vision" of a very small but very exquisite etching or wood-cut at the head of every poem. "If Blake were alive and I could afford it," he wrote early in 1872, "I would ask him to make a head-piece to each Bucolic. How exquisitely he would have done it we know." "My idea is poetic compression in antithesis to landscape diffuseness. * * I should myself like to undertake them, but it is hopeless. I have no spare brains and even less bodily strength, and what I have, is taxed to the uttermost." "These things so quickly conceived, consume much time; not so much in putting the work as musing *where* to put it."

It was unlikely that he would long be able to resist so great a temptation. Many passages both in the *Georgics* and the *Eclogues* appealed strongly to his imagination. First suggested perhaps, by the splendour of Italian skies and scenery—fostered by his love of Claude and Nicholas Poussin, Virgilian landscapes haunted his mind, their birth retarded only by the difficulty at that time, of reproducing certain kinds of work in fac-simile.

It was in May 1872, while at the sea-side, that he began the series of designs upon which, small though they were, he intended to bestow more time and thought than upon any work he had ever undertaken:—"I found in my Virgil designs," he wrote in the same year to Mr. Hamerton,

" ' Society where none intrudes
By the deep sea ;—'

for five weeks inventing, selecting, rejecting and finally beginning the ten upon their proper papers. Never was work more enjoyed. * * It is now my all-engrossing study, but they will take time, seeing that they admit of no art expletives and conventionalities. * * I am longing to see them done, but I know that the shortest and only way is to aim at no mechanical finish, to put only touches of love. * * I hope to make them distinctly the best things I have ever

done, and I shall do them with the hope also, that they might live after me if all else perished."

Extreme as was the care with which these subjects were elaborated, slowly absorbing all that was best in a life's selection from nature's choicest jewels—beautiful as they seemed, drawn with pen and Indian ink on cardboard, yet some were afterwards abandoned when well advanced, for other conceptions deemed more perfect, or were entirely reconstructed. Indeed, in some instances, this happened more than once with the same subject, and always with manifest improvement though improvement had seemed impossible.

It was at first intended to reproduce the drawings by one or other of the mechanical processes then coming into notice, but after much patient investigation, and further counsel with Mr. Hamerton, Samuel Palmer decided at last, and not unwillingly, to fall back upon his favourite medium of expression—to illustrate each of the ten Eclogues with an etching.

For a veteran whose needle in almost a quarter of a century had given but ten etchings to the world, and who yet had achieved by them in all probability an undying reputation, this was no light undertaking. It showed that this was indeed to be a labour of love.

Unlike some who think that any casual sketch or scratch or daub is worthy of a copper plate with a "remarque" on the margin, he held that a design worthy to be reproduced by a process so complete and beautiful as etching, should first be selected with the most punctilious care from the quintessence rather of the mind than the portfolio; then pondered with thoughtful deliberation, until, in ripe maturity, each line of composition, each shade of chiar-oscuro became as faultless as learning bought of old experience could make them.

But the loftier the summit the harder the ascent. Delayed by pressure of other work and by this great fastidiousness of selection, the scheme ripened but slowly, and it was not until after the beginning of 1881 that Samuel Palmer was able to proceed in earnest. Having discussed the matter with me very fully, he decided finally on a plan of action.

He was at this time rapidly completing the last of the Milton series of large water-colour drawings and had some smaller ones in hand as well. These disposed of, another Virgil subject was designed, and finished with all the old solicitude. One more * was just begun, and cheerful about the scheme, now, at last it seemed, well afoot, Samuel Palmer showed no signs of any serious approaching change. None thought then, that this fair pastoral, so suggestive even in its birth, would never be completed; that the hand which should have matured it, would have so soon to lay aside the familiar pencil, no more to open for us by its magic touch, glimpses of a brighter world than ours—to call us far away from the prosaic monotonies of modern life to those ancient romantic days when Sabrina still visited the herds “along the twilight meadows,” or a “belated peasant” saw perhaps, at a distance in the uncertain moonlight, the Fairy Elves at their midnight revels in some old English forest glade.

Early in May my father became too ill to work, but at first no fear was entertained that the attack was dangerous. By the middle of the month there was a serious change, and from this time, little hope. I saw him on the 19th, when, though evidently sinking, he conversed cheerfully on many matters, and prominently among them on the Virgil scheme, cherished to the last. It was then, in almost the last words I was to speak to him, that I promised to devote myself to the fulfilment of the fondest wish of his latter years. Soon afterwards he became too weak to speak distinctly, although, in other respects, his faculties were unimpaired, and on the 24th of May he left us.

That my father's scheme should be realized not only in the letter but the spirit of his last wishes, has been my endeavour since his death.

Familiar with each landscape from its parent “blot” on some odd scrap of waste paper, to the imago-like unfolding of maturity, I had

* Of these two designs, one illustrates a passage in the 2nd Eclogue and faces p. 30; the other, each touch in which appeals pathetically to those who know how the hours then were numbered, is taken from the 10th Eclogue and faces p. 94.

as well, a series of touched proofs with memoranda intended by him for his own use in completing the etchings. There were also the original drawings. One plate had been highly wrought by his own hand; others were well advanced, but some of the designs had not been etched. It was his earnest wish that when a subject had been transferred to copper, the plate should be published, even if incomplete, rather than a reproduction of the finished drawing; and the reason was not far to seek by those who knew Samuel Palmer's opinions on etching and his practice. He had never bound his needle down to a slavish imitation of his pencil. When he began to etch, new thoughts would arise, fresh renderings perhaps suggest themselves. Thus, the etching was always in some degree an advance on the design. Moreover, in the plates which were least advanced, lurked precious qualities which copper alone would yield, and which, once secured, he valued far more than the softer finish or the technical precision of any other method.

As examples among others, the laden apple tree in the twilight pastoral facing page 22, and the huge cedars overshadowing Daphnis' mourners, may be cited as thoroughly realizing the views of this veteran etcher.

The etching illustrating the 7th Eclogue was, as I have said, completely finished by Samuel Palmer himself, and it has been my aim to do as little, rather than as much as possible to the other plates; just as much as would best fulfil what I *knew* to be his intention, conveyed orally, or by the touched proofs and drawings—to do in short, only what was *absolutely* necessary to render his meaning fully evident. Better, some perhaps may say, to have published the unfinished plates just as the artist left them. To this I answer, that by doing so I should have acted in direct opposition to his last wishes—should have broken the last promise I could make him.

Although it was originally intended to illustrate each Eclogue with one etching, he was tempted by passages in the 1st and 8th to exceed that limit.

It has been mentioned that some of the drawings were abandoned,

even when well advanced, in favour of other renderings. I considered the older design to the 10th Eclogue well worthy of a place in this volume, as it is in some respects strikingly original and characteristic.

That which faces page 18 is not a revised but a totally distinct conception of a passage in the 1st Eclogue, chosen also as the subject of a large water-colour drawing exhibited in 1877 by the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours, and lately in the possession of Mr. George Gurney. It is by his kind permission that I am able to place a reproduction of the latter opposite page 20.

The other drawings which had not been etched have been reproduced by that scientific process so characteristic of the present century—photo-engraving. But any mechanical method, however perfect, leaves something to be desired when it deals with work of this unusually subtle nature. These plates therefore have passed through my hands, that they should do the more justice to the originals.

Touching the translation itself (if we may call it so) and the preceding *Observations on the Country and on Rural Poetry* little need be said. Those who knew the author will see at once how clearly they reflect his mind and sympathies, how congenial was the task he undertook. The poems were completed in 1872, but it was not till the inclement January of 1881 (four months before his death) that, while laid up in bed with a severe cold, Samuel Palmer put the finishing touches to the prose.

It must be distinctly understood that he did not claim for this work any merit as a literal or even as a free translation. I have called it a "paraphrase," but perhaps more correctly, it has been compared in musical phrase to "a meditation upon Virgil's air." The style makes no pretension to the scholarly accuracy of the present day, but savours rather of the old-fashioned freedom of the 17th century, while it endeavours to transfer to our own language more of the wholesome pastoral aroma of the original. It is for critics to determine whether this has not been better done than was possible by a more accurate rendering,—whether we are not more touched by an ancient bucolic sentiment, a sylvan peace, in these designs, than

if they had been topographically faultless, and Tityrus or Damon exactly in the "costume of the period."

In conclusion, I desire to tender my thanks, firstly to my father's old and valued friend, Mr. T. H. Wright, in whose classical and literary tastes he took much delight, and whose kind help has been of great service in the preparation of the manuscript. Secondly to Mr. Richmond Seeley, who, years since, embraced the project like its author, *con amore*, and who has spared no time or pains in helping me to realize it.

Of Mr. Hamerton's early connection with the "English Version" I have already spoken. A double portion of my father's gratitude to that gentleman for the warm interest he took in all concerning it, falls upon me, with the hope that he will be pleased to see the scheme he aided so kindly and materially, bearing fruit at last.

Farnborough, Kent, July 1883.

A. H. PALMER.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE COUNTRY AND ON RURAL POETRY.

IT was in the pleasant vale of Bickley that an accomplished friend, to whose conversation I am indebted for some of the happiest hours of life, sat down under a tree and solaced himself by repeating aloud in the sonorous original, passages from one of Virgil's Eclogues. 'O you poor lost creature!' cried an acquaintance who had accidentally wandered to the spot, and thus detected his weakness. To a sharp man of the world, both verse and philosophy are superfluous: routine and the market have shaped and set him to a mediocrity for which epic is too high and the bucolic too lowly; and if he believe all poetry to be useless, by what diminutive of contempt will he designate its pastoral mood; with its wax-jointed pipes and poetic sheep which never come to mutton? Facts and mutton are his universe: his morning paper comes in with the water-cresses, and almost as wet; there he reads all that can be collected concerning everything: what can man do more? We must not tell him that perhaps his back is to the light, like those men in Plato's cavern; and that though his eyes are wide open, he may be watching shadows.

There are others to whom rural poetry may have become distasteful for a very different reason. Their good taste may have been revolted by the Strephons and Chloes of the coffee-house poets, in what is sometimes called the Augustan age of our literature; and much more so perhaps, by a glance at the Arcadia of Louis the Fifteenth; at crooks tipped with silver and tittering shepherdesses who left their 'cher moutons' for a day's holiday to enjoy the tortures of Damians, played at cards while the executioner rested, and when it came to the tug of dismemberment, pitied the horses!

The influence which settled upon our literature at the Restoration, was so sickly and unnatural, taste and morals being alike corrupted, that purity and healthy freshness, picturesque vigour and

artless beauty—all that we enjoy in the country and that is pleasing in idyllic verse, vanished in the contact, and a manner supervened so spurious and tawdry that its phrases have become ludicrous. Such are ‘purling streams’ and ‘verdant meads’; and ‘tinkling rills’ must be dispensed with, although, perhaps, we came first upon them near the ‘White walls’ of the ‘Paraclete.’ Such is the course of literature and art; like the coast wave of the Atlantic, which rises slowly, abruptly falls, and is dispersed in spray: the author of *Comus* was scarcely gone, and it had fallen to this! The Sicilian Muse was painting hand-screens!

But counterfeits imply a genuine currency, and of this we have abundance in the rural wealth of Greece, Italy and England: the pure gold of Fletcher, in his *Faithful Shepherdess*, fears no comparison with Tasso or Guarini; and with what shall we compare Virgil’s bees? His Eclogues, universally read and quoted, after nearly two thousand years, have come down to us attended by an array of critics and commentators, which may remind us of the camp followers of Xerxes. In 1749, Professor Martyn had bestowed upon them a volume of loving labour, yet without prejudice to the researches of Mr. Conington and others, more than a century later. Indeed these little poems, a pamphlet in bulk, seem to resemble natural phenomena which investigations never exhaust.

Wisely have our forefathers discerned in verse one of the noblest instruments of education, and made the greatest poems our school books; for these present us with stories and examples more winning than precept, and dispose us to think and speak justly, to do or suffer nobly: their attraction may withdraw the young from many follies, many questionable or vicious amusements; for they arrest the fancy, that roving lawless faculty, and so far preoccupy it, that it is less likely to become the cage ‘of every unclean and hateful bird.’ When the seven more wicked spirits found the house swept and garnished, they found it also empty.

We might be grateful to the poets, if the benign influence of their art did nothing more than make us love the country; and while we are yet uncorrupted, open to us a world of innocent pleasures; enriching us as it were, with a new sense, which invests familiar objects with meaning and beauty, disposing us to quiet habits and simple manners, and acquainting us with such relics and fragments of the golden age, as Astræa did happily leave behind her.

Have we a patrimony :—what if these attractions persuade us to reside upon it ? Our capital is over-peopled, and human lungs are breathing an atmosphere which decomposes stone ; the Western end of the New Palace having begun to peel or crumble, before the East was finished : then the whole was permeated by alarming smells from the river, which no future Denham is likely to select either for his theme or his ‘example.’ It is said that out of town we merely vegetate ; better so than wither : one would think that with less dissipation there would be more time for improvement : is it progressive to tread upon an author’s corns in the crush of some London soir  e, and vegetative to read his best thoughts in his best words at Penzance ?

No little will be the gain to a young man of competent estate and education, if he determines to begin life where the best and wisest men have desired to await its close ; if he prefer unsullied air, a buxom wife and rosy children, to the ‘London Season,’ late hours, jaded and failing beauty and a sickly nursery ; if, with Cowley, he would choose ‘a small house and large garden,’ rather than a large mansion with none : if he prefer sunshine to smoke ; bean-fields, violets and new-mown hay, to reeking drains ; the blackbird’s carol to the enharmonic feline opera of the pantiles : and should poetic sympathies have at all influenced his choice, he will not be thankless, when he considers either what he has gained or what he has escaped : nor will they be thankless, who, having worked their way to competence, have been persuaded to a timely retirement.

‘Methinks I see great Diocletian walk
In the Salonian garden’s noble shade,
Which by his own Imperial hands was made :
I see him smile, methinks, as he does talk
With the ambassadors who come in vain,
T’ entice him to a throne again.
“If I, my friends,” said he “should to you show
All the delights which in these gardens grow,
’Tis likelier much that you should with me stay,
Than ’tis that you should carry me away :
And trust me not, my friends, if every day,
I walk not here with more delight,
Than ever, after the most happy fight,
In triumph to the Capitol I rode,
To thank the Gods, and to be thought myself almost a God.”’

It is not the recluse or disappointed who have most loved the country, but those whose position gave them the choice of all that is coveted in courts and cities. Lord Clarendon, the father of a queen, remarks that true politeness was never the offspring of a court ; and that when country gentlemen were content to dwell among their own people, the wisdom and frugality of those times were such, ' that few gentlemen made journeys to London but upon important business, and their wives never ; by which providence they enjoyed and improved their estates in the country, and kept good hospitality in their house, brought up their children well, and were beloved of their neighbours.' And so far were they from incivility and ignorance, that, in the opinion of able judges, Professor Goldwin Smith among the number, ' Our nobility and gentry were more highly educated under the later Tudors and earlier Stuarts, than at any other period of our history. Their education was classical ; but a classical education meant then, not a gymnastic exercise of the mind in philology, but a deep draught from what was the great and almost the only spring of philosophy, science, history and poetry of that time.' And the battle fields of the civil war bore strenuous evidence that the softer studies had been amply complemented by public spirit, courage and practical energy.

In the fertile vale of Avon in Wiltshire where anciently, within a distance of thirty miles, stood fifty mansions or manor houses, it was said as many years ago, that there were then only eight remaining. Each of these with its village or hamlet, was a little polity, in which rule and subordination might be only harsher names for guidance and loyalty : there were no extremes of wealth and destitution, of insolence and servility.

Fancy would renew the antlered and oak-ribbed dining hall ; the occult still-room ; the few but all-sufficing books : even the spinet or later harpsichord, which ' had a tongue with a tang ' and was the better for it : those mullioned windows looking out upon the farm-houses and smaller cottages, nestling deep in their gardens and orchards : the moated grange with its chapel and dwarf clock-tower : all these presenting no frightful inequalities of condition, but only so much as might stimulate industry, and give occasion for neighbourly help and beneficence.

Whither were these old families dispersed, after they had ceased to live ' among their own people ' ? It may be that some of their

descendants were doing nobler work in crowded cities; arresting the advance of disease or crime; and that in scant leisure, turning over their old school books, georgical verse revived agrarian instincts, and seemed to refresh the fœtid neighbourhood, like a Tramontana from the Apennine: for rural poetry is the pleasure ground of those who live in cities. It repairs in a measure the natural link which has been broken when man has been removed from the cultivation of his native earth, and sees little from the windows that can make vision desirable: it is then that verse presents to fancy what is lost to sight; and when all the foulnesses without are frozen down into a black fog, he may call for lights, refresh the fire, and have tolerable weather with the poets.

The rural Muse has found favour with men of every class and calling; from the recluse student, to Octavius and Mæcenas; often where the habits of life seem to be least congenial. It was Charles James Fox who said, 'There is nothing like poetry!' The Pastorals of Virgil were still in his hand, thrown as he was upon evil times in evil company. By night, on the St. Lawrence, General Wolfe, having repeated Gray's *Elegy* to some of the officers of his staff, told them he would rather have written that poem, than achieve the victory for which, a few hours later, he was content to have given his life.

Lavater's aphorism bids us hold loosely to the man who 'does not love bread, music, and the laugh of a child.' Next of kin to this unpleasant person, is the man who has no relish for the country: unspoiled men love it. When we read the lives of heroes and great statesmen, do we not follow them with peculiar interest from the camp or the senate to their cherished retirements? Fancy lingers with the Imperial gardener at Sardis, with the returned dictator tilling his four acres; and is better entertained while King William is teaching Swift to plant cabbages after the Dutch fashion in Sir William Temple's kitchen-garden, than when expediency, political or commercial, is suffered to do its work in Glencoe or on the isthmus of Darien. When we turn away from such things, there is a refreshing contrast, and the resolving of civic percussions into sylvan peace, makes a kind of music; there is something like congruity and loyalty: we are pleased to see the 'mighty hunters' relenting; the disturbing forces moving in sympathy with their planet; the pompous creature whose pedigree is dust, leaning with some dutiful regard towards his homely mother.

To those who are engrossed with politics or the cares of govern-

ment, rural scenes and sympathies and their cognate verse afford, not recreation merely, but a wholesome moral counterpoise and complement. Tactics and a nimble tongue may furnish the politician, but homelier matters are wanted to complete the man. Neither the fame of his eloquence nor the scope and symmetry of his affluent wisdom suffice to present us with the whole of Edmund Burke: the portrait is rounded with all its genial hues at Beaconsfield. Such episodes of history—digressions rather, into somewhat of the honest and natural, of the kindly and benign, make pleasant changes in our reading; and truly the readers of history need refreshment. Jaded with the weary chronicle, the old iteration of lust, perjury and violence, if we shut the book and walk out into the fields we seem to have stepped upon another planet. ‘Can these fresh meads,’ we ask, ‘can these wholesome furrows, be part and parcel of an expanse which has endured such pollution, covered so much innocent blood?’ Yet history must be read, because the past is the explanation of the present, and the horoscope of the future; but ever and anon it will be well for us to make holiday among the quiet people by whose healthy labour we subsist and eat the fatness of the earth: then the happiness of Virgil’s husbandmen in the second *Georgic* will be the better understood, and the honour of their calling, in contrast with the flattered abject, who ‘seeks to ruin families and cities, that he may drink from gems and sleep on Sarran scarlet.’

It is nothing to the purpose that he and the farmer might have changed manners had they changed places; that was in Virgil’s mind when he praised a country life, for he was simple enough to suppose that it had a moral influence upon our common nature; nor was he aware that the cultivation of the earth was a stupefying employment, and the peasant skilled in the varieties of farm labour, a log: no! ‘Non omnia possumus omnes’—that discovery was reserved for us. How could Virgil anticipate our progress, with whom the ‘bucolic mind’ has become the synonym of fatuity? But those who are ‘behind the age,’ and not very anxious to overtake it, will discern in their ancient friends—in the Ploughman who lives in Chaucer’s verse, and his kindred, something better than a barbaric foil to the intelligence of the modern artizan—especially to the hapless one dwarfed within some one of the minute subdivisions of labour, ever putting heads upon pins, or slave in waiting to the machine which can do it more

quickly. As to the proprietor himself, or the farmer of a moderate estate, with all its varieties of soil, aspect and irrigation, we cannot fail to perceive, if we are suffered to relapse into common sense, that its full cultivation amidst all casualties demands the same kind of ability, the same perception, enterprise, prudence and flexibility, as go, in a larger measure, to the making of a great general or statesman ; and this perhaps partly accounts for the zest with which in their leisure or retirement, such men have entered into the details of farming or gardening ; for these presented all the advantages of recreation without idleness ; change of air, of scene, of associations ; the strain and anxiety removed, and the skill which could manage senates brought into gentler play upon materials more tractable than the 'unruly wills and affections of sinful men.' Untoward weather, blight and stubborn soils, are but the rubs and penny forfeits of a game, to the veteran minister who has curbed or baffled popular insolence and caprice, overbearing tyranny and implacable faction. No wonder that he desires to escape. It is a seemly close, when one who has really loved and served, it may be saved his country, living wholly for others ; when such an one, now in sylvan seclusion, cloistered by shadowy woods, perhaps by his own ancestral oaks, finds leisure to peruse himself ; to commune with his own heart and revise the imaginations and desires of the interior polity :—

‘In such green palaces the first kings reign’d,
Slept in their shade and angels entertain’d :
With such old counsellors they did advise,
And, by frequenting sacred shades, grew wise.’

Neither the wisest men nor the best poems are usually inconversant with the country, for in epic and tragic story, when the action transpires within the walls of cities, the illustrations and imagery are remote. The spear of Satan opens a glimpse of ‘Norwegian hills’ and distant ocean ; Æschylus renders Cassandra’s last warning by a bucolic metaphor ; nor does imperial Tragedy demean herself, or fail to touch the heart, when she expresses utter bereavement by a mischance of the poultry yard :—

‘He has no children. All my pretty ones?
Did you say all ?—O hell-kite ! All ?
What, all my pretty chickens and their dam
At one fell swoop ?’

Thus do remote allusions and changing imagery set off the narrative with the foil of a broad contrast: similes connect the excursive opposite with the coherent story, through a partial resemblance in the particulars, and oftentimes we have a two-edged rhetoric in the complex figure, when the things compared are in some respects like, in other the reverse; so that the same comparison, at once enriches the subject-matter by analogies, and, as opposites manifest each other, enforces it by a contrast.

It has been observed that in Milton's 'woody theatre' (*Par. Lost*: Book 4: line 141) the single word 'theatre,' both illustrates the position of the trees in ascending ranks on the hill side, and adds to the sylvan quiet by glancing at its reverse, the noise and movement in a place of public concourse. This rebound from contact sends the fancy on many a magic jaunt fleetier than the witches' to Blockula. There is little affinity between fallen spirits and fallen leaves; but Milton takes occasion, from their likeness in respect of contiguous multitude, for a brief escape from the 'burning marl,' to cool rivulets of 'Vallombrosa.' Was that 'broad circumference' the shield of Satan?—Now, we are in Valdarno, and it is the moon, expanding her mysterious landscape in the Tuscan's glass.

It would seem then, that in heroic verse, the comparisons and allusions of themselves, apart from the interest, pathos, or passion of the story, gratify several of the desires of the mind and fancy: among others, our love of agriculture in its numerous aspects, of grand or luxurious scenery, of the pastoral and sylvan, of romantic legends and dim antiquity: that they refresh us with contrast, change and surprise; with likeness discovered in the unlike, which is akin to wit, and with its reverse, allied to satire; and that the expansive imagery, humouring our discursive instinct, presents us on either side, while we keep the main road of the story, with changing vistas and glimpses of boundless prospect.

If these then be but the accessories of epic story, how absolute must be the unity, how massive the proportions, which such an array of ornament does not encumber or confuse! What other verse can stand beside it? With Pindar's leave, were it not better that the limit of Aristotle's criticism should be the limit of the art? It is well for us that the poets did not think so; else, what bequests we should have lost; estates (for such are all good poems) in which each has a real,

but all a common property: where were the *Idyls* of Theocritus, the *Eclogues*, the *Georgics*, the minor poems of Milton, his *Comus* and its parent spring the *Faithful Shepherdess*?

Now in these, however justly the style was attempered to the matter, and although in some of them, rustic or archaic phrases might be a tasteful choice, yet it was not found needful to degrade the action or circumstance, the characters or diction, because the scene was removed from camps and courts, which can claim no monopoly of true heroism or elegance. Nay, in Virgil's hands, the theme itself, the subject of a pastoral too, rises above the old heroic argument and leaves it far below: the fourth and sixth *Eclogues* indicate events—the creation of the universe and the final restitution, compared with which, the fall of Troy, nay, even the founding of Rome, are but an interlude. What is wanting of elevation or delicacy to the dialogue in *Comus*; or to its author's consummate verse in that noiseless victory of the wilderness, *Paradise Regained*? And if it were seemly to compare other matter with the sacred text, it might be asked whether the suffering and patience of the bucolic patriarch Job, are not more sublimely celebrated, than, elsewhere, any scenes of slaughter, or varieties of mutilation.

In the age of Louis the Fourteenth, when war was supposed to be the proper employment of gentlemen, rural culture a servile drudgery, it was not unlikely that a French critic, Fontenelle, would censure loftiness of thought as a breach of pastoral decorum, and that the *Eclogue* which delighted Cicero would seem grotesquely absurd to the eulogist of the Academy. The condition too of the French peasantry was deplorable, and pastoral poetry is read at a disadvantage when nothing that we have ever seen resembles it; for we lose the pleasant refreshment of alternate fact and fiction, of their sisterly distinctness within a family likeness; but classic art, unless in the satiric mood, deals with crime and misery only when they may be sublimed into the elements of tragedy. Whenever misgovernment or encroaching wealth, garden filching, enclosure, and violation of common-right, are making the country life a term convertible with stinted food, squalid habitations and sordid manners, bucolic poetry departs: the rural Thalia may blush, may weep, but cannot sing.

Dr. Johnson, who was not less learned in the structure and economics of verse, than obtuse sometimes to its more subtle and distinctive

essence, defines a pastoral to be 'a poem in which any passion is represented by its effects upon a country life'; and observes that it admits of all ranks of persons, because all ranks inhabit the country; and that therefore it does not exclude, 'on account of the characters necessary to be introduced, any elevation or delicacy of sentiment'; nor any intensity, we may add, of pathos and passion, because natural feeling is the same everywhere, and is less disguised as it is removed from courts and factions: the joy is innocent, the sorrow unselfish. That is a diseased compassion which waits for commotional stimulants; which cannot be touched by the lament for Daphnis, or the episode of Eurydice; but sympathizes rather with fallen pride or detected crime than with oppressed innocence, or struggling virtue, or truth, faithful to the death; a spectacle more noble than the reappearance of Achilles or the field of Arbela. The poet himself who described a more stupendous conflict, who opened all the sources of terror in the meeting, not of Hector with Achilles, but of Satan with Death, was of higher instinct than canine and quarrelsome;

'Not sedulous by nature to indite
Wars, hitherto the only argument
Heroic deemed; chief mastery to dissect
With long and tedious havoc fabled knights
In battle feign'd; the better fortitude
Of patience and heroic martyrdom
Unsung;—'

It was probable that the hold of the earliest epic upon the imagination of mankind would, somewhat illogically, connect the idea of heroic verse with a siege and a city; with warlike pageants and animal prowess rather than with

'— that which justly gives heroic name
To person or to poem.'

The scene of the *Iliad* being warlike, though its subject is the evil of wrath, set the fashion that way; although the *Odyssey* was teaching, or was about to teach, a nobler lesson of equanimity and fortitude. Virgil sang of arms, but of arms and the man; the pious and all-enduring man Æneas; and of much besides, which the poet loved better and esteemed more noble than homicide. In the sixth Eclogue, when Cynthia touches his ear, he apprehends the inner sense

of the admonition not to exchange the crook for the falchion: on this he prunes his wing for a loftier flight, and leaves the battle fields to the dogs and vultures.

A BIRD deprived of her wings is not more incomplete than the human mind without imagination, a faculty distinct from the spiritual and rational, yet having a common language; for the language of imagination is poetry, and it is in poetry that both sacred aspiration and secular wisdom have found their noblest utterance.

For no small portion of their renown, the greatest nations have been beholden to their poets, not so much from the lustre of their names, as because their living words from age to age, continued to educate the leaders of the people, keeping before them the ideas of justice, magnanimity and fortitude, exemplified in persuasive story. Robust nations which were merely warlike, without arts or literature, though useful to weaker races by the infusion of new blood, after they had shed what they could of the old, muster in history without adorning it; they were formidable as locusts are formidable.

It may savour of paradox to number poetry with the useful arts, for the very reason that among all those who come within its influence, it develops imagination; an endowment often contemned as idle or mischievous, incurring perhaps the discredit of a purblind and vagrant fancy which is mistaken for it: but disciplined imagination in equipoise with learning and judgement is very active, practical and materially productive; what it sees within, always desiring to make and embody without. Foreknowing the end it can best devise the means, going to work the shortest way, with least alteration and no waste of material; while a more prosaic and tentative industry, rather feeling its way than seeing it, is officiously busy before it is quite known what is to be done: and often we have seen in affairs little or great, private or public, a change in the very aim or purpose when the work was half completed. The ideal faculty was absent; it had not defined the aim or created the motive: when those are clear, the progress will be steady; when the purpose is noble, much may have been achieved though we fall somewhat short of the mark.

To the prolific industry of the imagination of the earlier ages we owe more than half the attraction of foreign travel: it was that

prophetic and aquiline vision which devised each great monument of antiquity, transformed the quarried marble, and in later ages conceived the cloistered minster and ærial spire.

Imagination radiates through many avenues of thought; through some which are remote from the demesnes of fiction; quickening perception, suggesting analogies, and wakeful to the minutest research and most delicate experiment: that it should be 'brilliant and active' in the laboratory, is the judgment of Sir Humphry Davy, of whom it was said that he would have been the best poet of the day if he had not been the best chemist; and indeed, the most romantic fancy, weary for a time of griffins and giants, might find itself at home there, amid the feuds and affiances, the transformations and vagaries of inorganic matter.

What a scope is here for busy idleness, for futile experiment and puerile curiosity, bewildered by the number of its toys! Yet these wayward elements, marshalled by human intelligence, and combined by ideal forethought for specific purpose, are no less a thing than Chemistry; the science which in alliance with mechanics, restores the appliances of lost civilization, and has contributed so much of the necessities, comforts and ornaments of life. Mechanism, inspired by an Idea, has quintupled speed by an elastic vapour, and made lightning our messenger.

Seeing then that the ideal energy is practical and prolific, impregnating our designs and speculations through so wide a range as from its own cognate arts and heroic poesy to the alembic and retort, it would seem strange that men not wanting in depth and sagacity, should regard it with indifference or distrust, and censure its direct expression in measured verse as a kind of idleness. Would that it had never been worse; had never given some colour of prudence to Locke's advice in his *Thoughts on Education*, that if a son have the poetic vein, his parents should labour to have it stifled and suppressed as much as may be. In Locke's day the gift of poetry had been shamefully prostituted, and if, like Milton, he had esteemed it a divine endowment, he would the more have revolted from the ungrateful sacrilege: but although disposed to judge it by its abuse, he could scarcely have ignored what is so obvious both in ancient and modern history, its better influence upon many nations, throughout many ages; of the *Iliad* notably, bequeathing to pagan antiquity the idea of the

Great ; the great in conception and speech, in action and endurance ; of the *Odyssey*, presenting the image of prudence and fortitude in Ulysses ; instructing men in the affairs and perplexities of life, and restraining them by the fear of a 'personal, watchful and retributive Providence.'

Plato knew the persuasiveness of verse, when in the two books of his *Republic* he censured its licence : dreading its power, Edward slaughtered the bards. It was shrewdly said, 'Let any one make the laws of a country, if I may make the songs' ; for its national lyrics are the animal spirits of the body politic. Its graver verse tempers public morals and even the established faith. Dr. Maitland in his *Erwin*, has observed, perhaps not without reason, that the *Paradise Lost* has done much to shape the popular theology.

The influence of poetry pervades all civilized life ; the more so from its point and brevity and because metre and rhyme are easily remembered. It sets wit and philosophy to music, its satire is the keener for its polish, and it disguises medicinal truth in nectar. It is certain that Shakespeare and Pope have left us an informal code of morals and manners, more pregnant than didactic treatises. The loss would be perceived like a deprivation of the air we breathe without thinking of it, if their influence could suddenly be effaced from the conversation of educated Englishmen. A friend once remarked, 'I have been reading Pope for the first time, but I have been hearing him all my life.'

If those who are cumbered or paralyzed by worldly cares or prosperity, find the ideal too insubstantial for their touch, let them not impeach its reality and force, until they have observed its counterpart in the material world ; where, through the whole ascent, swiftness and power are gained, as matter becomes less gross and ponderable : oaks are shattered by a fluid (if it be so much), and steam or gases break the mountain, or heave it up from the depths of the sea. What else is the tornado, than an invisible and permeable element which, in its playfulness, is the balm of spring ? Poetry, in its flexible strength and mercurial temper is like the 'delicate Ariel' ; now, charming the isle with fitful music ; now dispersing himself in sudden flame ; entertaining the lovers with a fairy masque, or chafing the sea and rolling the thunder.

And this noblest eloquence, this extract rather, and ethereal spirit

of eloquence, accosts us, as Sir Philip Sydney has observed, with no pedantic formula or crabbed rudiments, but draws us with the sweetness of its music from the jars and discrepancies of outer life, touching and tempering every wry passion, and, by a strange alchemy, transmuting grief and terror into fascination and delight: liberal and pliant to our instincts and frailties, playfellow of youth and solace of age, it rounds backward as it were, its maturest wisdom towards the intuitive desires of our childhood, and in its noblest achievement of ode or epic, offers just what we were best pleased with in the nursery, a song or a story.

Yet there will never be wanting some who are in the old cry, 'What, so much for a song!' even were that song Spenser's; not to mention the Imperial regret that Virgil had escaped decapitation.

ADVERTISEMENT.

I N attempting this version of the *Eclogues* with a view to the symmetry of each as an English poem, there was obvious reason for veiling some portions in paraphrase; but this involved little alteration and no loss of imagery. In other parts much is exactly literal, and a more free rendering supervenes only where verbal translation would misrepresent; transferring little or nothing of the original spirit, pathos, or melody.

Some of the responses of the third and seventh Eclogues, and fragments of song in the ninth, which in passing fill the ear with music, would be meagre and abrupt in a less tuneful language: therefore, in such places, the literal English is not exactly what Virgil, writing in our tongue, would have chosen: but in venturing to conjecture his treatment, we may stop short of the diffuse: any extension, however little, would have been extension of substance; not of space for superfluous words.

ECLOGUE THE FIRST.

THE ARGUMENT.

TITYRUS and Melibœus converse about their various fortune ;
the one exiled, the other restored to his patrimony.

Amidst the conflict of opinion as to the persons intended in this Eclogue, and leaving the question of allegory in those of Galatea and Amaryllis, it may be viewed as a thank-offering to Augustus ; a persuasive to extend to others the justice he had rendered to Virgil in the restitution of his inheritance, and incidentally, as a protest against military outrage and the national corruption which engenders civil war.

Mantua had not sided against Octavius, yet the soldiers of the triumvirate seized Mantuan estates and expelled the owners : among these was Virgil, to whom, perhaps through the intercession of Mæcenus and Varus, Cæsar restored his patrimony ; which, at last, with difficulty and some peril was recovered.

O fortunate old man!
Then these ancestral fields are yours again ;
And wide enough for you.



*O fortunate old man !
Then these ancestral fields are yours again ;*

ECLOGUE THE FIRST.

TITYRUS.

TITYRUS. MELIBŒUS.

MELIBŒUS.

YOU, Tityrus, at ease, carelessly laid
In covert of a beech tree's ample shade
Muse on a slender oat the rustic lay :
We our sweet native fields leave far away ;
We fly our country : pleasantly the while
Do you the vacant summer hours beguile,
Making the woods, and all the upland ground,
With lovely Amaryllis' name resound.

TITYRUS.

O Melibœus, this tranquillity
A God hath wrought ; for never less may I
Conceive him : oft a firstling shall imbrue
His altars to whom all the fold is due :
He bids me, while my browsing heifers rove,
Temper at will the mellow reeds I love.

MELIBŒUS.

No envy moves me, rather I admire ;
For to your doors almost, pillage and fire
Have wasted ; arms and civil discords jar.
Lo, sick myself, I drive these goats afar ;
And this, this ewe, can scarce lead on, for now
Beside the plot where yonder hazels grow,
Yeanning twin kids, the promise of the flock,

Alas! she left them on the naked rock.
And I remember, thoughtless then and blind,
Of my stout oaks how oft the scatter'd rind,
Struck by heaven's fire, would these ill times foreshow,
These, from some hollow trunk, the baleful crow,
Unheeded. But declare, good Tityrus,
Who this may be, what god protects you thus.

TITYRUS.

The city, stately Rome, I, foolish, thought
Like this of ours, whither we oft have brought
Our tumbrils, or driven on the butting lambs.
As whelps to dogs, as kids are like their dams,
So I, comparing with large things the small,
Thought Mantua like the greater capital:
But Rome lifts over these her towery head,
As cypresses o'erlook the shrubby mead.

MELIBŒUS.

What business brought you to the Roman state?

TITYRUS.

Liberty, Melibœus! She, though late,
Did yet regard me, when inert and worn,
First from my beard some whiter hairs were shorn.
Still she regarded me, so long bereft:
'Twas when the luckless Galatea left,
And Amaryllis charm'd: till then were vain
All hope of liberty, all care of gain.
Fair flocks were fed in fold or on the down,
Fat cheeses press'd for the ungrateful town,
Yet I return'd scarce better than I went,
With nimble gold, no sooner earn'd than spent.

MELIBŒUS.

I marvell'd, Amaryllis, while you lay
Dejected, calling on the gods all day,

O fortunate old man !

*Then these ancestral fields are yours again ;
And wide enough for you. Though naked stone,
And marsh with slimy rush, abut upon
The lowlands, yet your pregnant coves shall try
No unproved forage ; neighbouring flocks, too nigh,
Strike no contagion, nor infect the young :
O fortunate, who now at last, among
Known streams and sacred fountain-heads have found
A shelter and a shade on your own ground.*



*O fortunate, who now at last, among
known streams and sacred fountain heads have found
A shelter and a shade in your own ground.*

For whom it was you left so charily
 The ruddiest apples hanging on the tree.
 Tityrus was gone: you thought the airy pine
 Sigh'd "Tityrus," and the dishevell'd vine
 And vacant grove; and could his name recall,
 Syllabled in the fountain and the fall.

TITYRUS.

What could I do? For while I linger'd here,
 My thralldom I could neither break nor bear,
 Nor find a present aid: I saw in Rome
 The godlike youth: to him, from our old home,
 Yearly, for twice six days, the altars smoke—
 "Swains, feed as wont your kine," he said, "and yoke
 Your lusty steers."

MELIBŒUS.

O fortunate old man!

Then these ancestral fields are yours again;
 And wide enough for you. Though naked stone,
 And marsh with slimy rush, abut upon
 The lowlands, yet your pregnant ewes shall try
 No unproved forage; neighbouring flocks, too nigh,
 Strike no contagion, nor infect the young:
 O fortunate, who now at last, among
 Known streams and sacred fountain-heads have found
 A shelter and a shade on your own ground.

Hyblæan bees about your hedges taste
 The flowering willows, and their shadow cast
 Invites the day-dream ere warm days are sped;
 You listen to the music overhead;
 Innumerable wings a drowsy concert keep,
 And lightly murmuring whisper you to sleep.

Awaked, you hear the jocund vinedresser
 Under the rock side carolling to air;
 Fatlings and fowl your teeming barn-yard fill,
 Nor cease your wood-pigeons their crooning still,
 Nor turtles from the old ærial elm.

TITYRUS.

The sounds and seas will cast their fish, or whelm
 The forked hills, the stags on ether browse,
 Or earth's firm continent her lands transpose ;
 Of Arar's current shall the Parthian drink,
 Athirst, the German kneel by Tigris' brink,
 Ere I forget or lightly can recall
 His gracious image who hath given me all.

MELIBŒUS.

But we must hence, or to the Libyan sand,
 Or frozen Scythia ; some, the Cretan strand
 Explore of swift Oaxes ; others dare
 The utmost coast where scythed Britons fare ;
 A place apart from all the world, they say,
 An oaken forest girt with headlands grey.

Have we a distant hope ; shall I at last
 Return, when travel has confused the past,
 From bleak exile, and wondering at the change
 Come, at a turn, upon the byres, the grange,
 Lowly and thatch'd with turf, where I was born ;
 A realm to me, a loss I vainly mourn,
 Thrust headlong by a soldier from the soil
 Rich with my kindred's immemorial toil ?
 For him to sickle were these fallows plough'd ;
 Shall the barbarian eat the crops we sow'd ;
 My standing crop an alien robber sweep,
 Clad in the stolen fleeces of my sheep ?
 Ah, see the ruin civil discords yield,
 The heirs for whom our fathers dress'd the field,
 Now, Melibœus, graft your pears again ;
 Now to the measured poles your vintage train !

Go, my once happy flock, and my ewe goats !
 No more at dawn, loosed from your hurdle cotes,
 You scatter all the dew ; nor idly prone,
 Where vines the dusky cavern have o'ergrown,
 I watch you hanging on the cliffs at noon,

*Ripe 'apples are our supper, cream unstirr'd,
Boil'd chestnuts, plenty of the sweeten'd curd :
See, glimmering in the West, the homeward star ;
And from the crest of upland towns afar,
The hearth-smoke rise ; while gathering over all,
From the steep mountains greater shadows fall.*



*See, glimmering in the West, the homeward star;
And from the crest of upland towns afar,
The hearth-smoke rise;*

Or pipe you home beneath the rising moon ;
Never soft verse be warbled more ; the flute
Is broken and the gamesome reeds are mute.
No more, my goats, before your sire I go,
And lead you where the bitter sallows grow,
Feed from the hand or heap your winter store,
The flowery cytissus you crop no more.

TITYRUS.

Yet stay with us to-night, our pens will keep
Your goats, and here you may securely sleep.
Ripe apples are our supper, cream unstirr'd,
Boil'd chestnuts, plenty of the sweeten'd curd :
See, glimmering in the West, the homeward star ;
And from the crest of upland towns afar,
The hearth-smoke rise ; while gathering over all,
From the steep mountains greater shadows fall.

ECLOGUE THE SECOND.

THE ARGUMENT.

IN the English version of this Eclogue, Corydon, neglecting his affairs, laments the coldness of Galatea ; but coming to himself, rebukes his own folly in wasting time and substance upon an unrequited attachment.

ECLOGUE THE SECOND.

GALATEA.

THE shepherd Corydon, his flocks astray,
For comely Galatea pined away.
What is there in a fickle maiden's word?
And she had whisper'd with their rural lord.
Yet deep within the thickest beech-tree shade,
Where the dense roof a sullen twilight made,
He came assiduous, and lonely there,
Pour'd a loose unpremeditated prayer;
And the strange notes, to love and sorrow true,
Thus to the forest and the mountains threw.

Ah cruel Galatea, is it so?
No care for my sad lays, no touch of slow
Relenting pity? Then the shaft is cast,
And from your hand I take my death at last.

Now panting herds in shadiest covert hide,
Or taste the coolness of the fountain side
And cavern; even the green lizards lie
Darkling in brakes and brambles; noon is nigh,
And busy Thestylis lays by her reel
To pound wild thyme and garlic for their meal
When the brown harvest-men, foredone with heat,
Come in, and at the savoury board are set.

But while, under the beating sun, I trace
Your footsteps through the vine plots, and each place,
Upland or dale, that you were wont to love,
The pruners leave the purpled elms, each grove

Is still, or in the heat sounds drearily,
But with the hoarse balm-crickets and with me.

Than this, were it not better to endure
Even the saucy slights, the pout demure
Of Amaryllis; better far to bear
With fitful Phillis, though she swarthy were,
And thou alas! too fair: yet is not pearl
Match'd by the glowing ruby? Lovely girl,
Be not too vain, nor deem complexion all;
Dark hyacinths are cull'd, white hedge-bells fall.

I am despised by you, nor do you stay
Even to ask who this may be; where stray
Those heifers, white as snow, those browsing sheep;
What curds and cheese my creaming dairies heap.
Of mine a thousand ewes are wandering o'er
Sicilia's mountains; daily twice I pour
The frothing milk from oaken pails, nor lost
In summer's drought nor in the wintery frost.
I chant the notes Amphion wont to play,
Theban Amphion, at the close of day,
What time he call'd his herds, and led to stall
From cliffs of Aracynthus. Nor withal
Coarse am I or misform'd; I chanced to pass,
And see my image in the watery glass,
When the sea lay unruffled by the wind;
And now I would not fear, though thou, unkind,
Wert umpire, e'en with Daphnis to compare,
If the unwavering mirror play'd me fair.

O that you might but be content to dwell
In these despised retreats; with me to tell
The autumn treasure of our shelter'd farm,
Thatch'd from the summer's heat, in winter warm:
Lightly sometimes to chase the flying hart,
Gather the flock, or trend the kids apart
With a green mallow twig: in forest shade
Along with me, the while I deftly play'd,
Carolling in the mood himself began,
You should attempt the very notes of Pan.

Pan first, in waxen cells, th' unequal reeds
 Taught us to join, and still his Syrinx pleads
 When they are breathed on : Pan protects our sheep,
 Our shepherds under starlight skies asleep ;
 And though we play while shepherdesses sing,
 Yet, if for pastime, you reverse the thing,
 Endure to fray a little on the quill
 Those dainty lips, ere long to gain the skill.
 What pains or travail did Alcippe spare
 To breathe and finger each Arcadian air ?

But I have flutes which Delius might have sought,
 So richly toned and delicately wrought.
 There is a pipe of mine, compact of seven
 Unequal reeds : 'tis long since it was given :
 Damœtas gave it me, and dying, said,
 "This pipe, that every tuneful mood has led,
 Owns you its master now." Damœtas thus :
 Foolish Amyntas then grew envious.

Ah thankless maiden, is there anything
 Your fancy craves, that I would grudge to bring ?
 Lately for you the slippery rock I tried,
 And clefts of an unventured mountain side :
 Two males of the wild kids I brought away,
 And playmates rear for you, more light than they.
 A sheep, their foster-dam, the sturdy twins
 Drain daily twice, and even now their skins
 Are fleck'd with white ; and both for you I save,
 Though Thestylis entreats that she may have
 The frolic pair : and so she will, since now
 You slight my gifts. Yet let it not be so ;
 But come, haste hither : Galatea, see !
 The very Nymphs, to greet you sisterly
 Have fill'd with lilies each her basket slight ;
 And radiant Nais, all for your delight,
 Gathering pale violets, and then a glow
 Of silken poppies, flowers that fragrant blow ;
 Anise and changed Narcissus, interweaves
 With cassia all the sweetest-smelling leaves,

And with bright marigold, placed here and there,
Paints the soft hyacinth darker as it were.

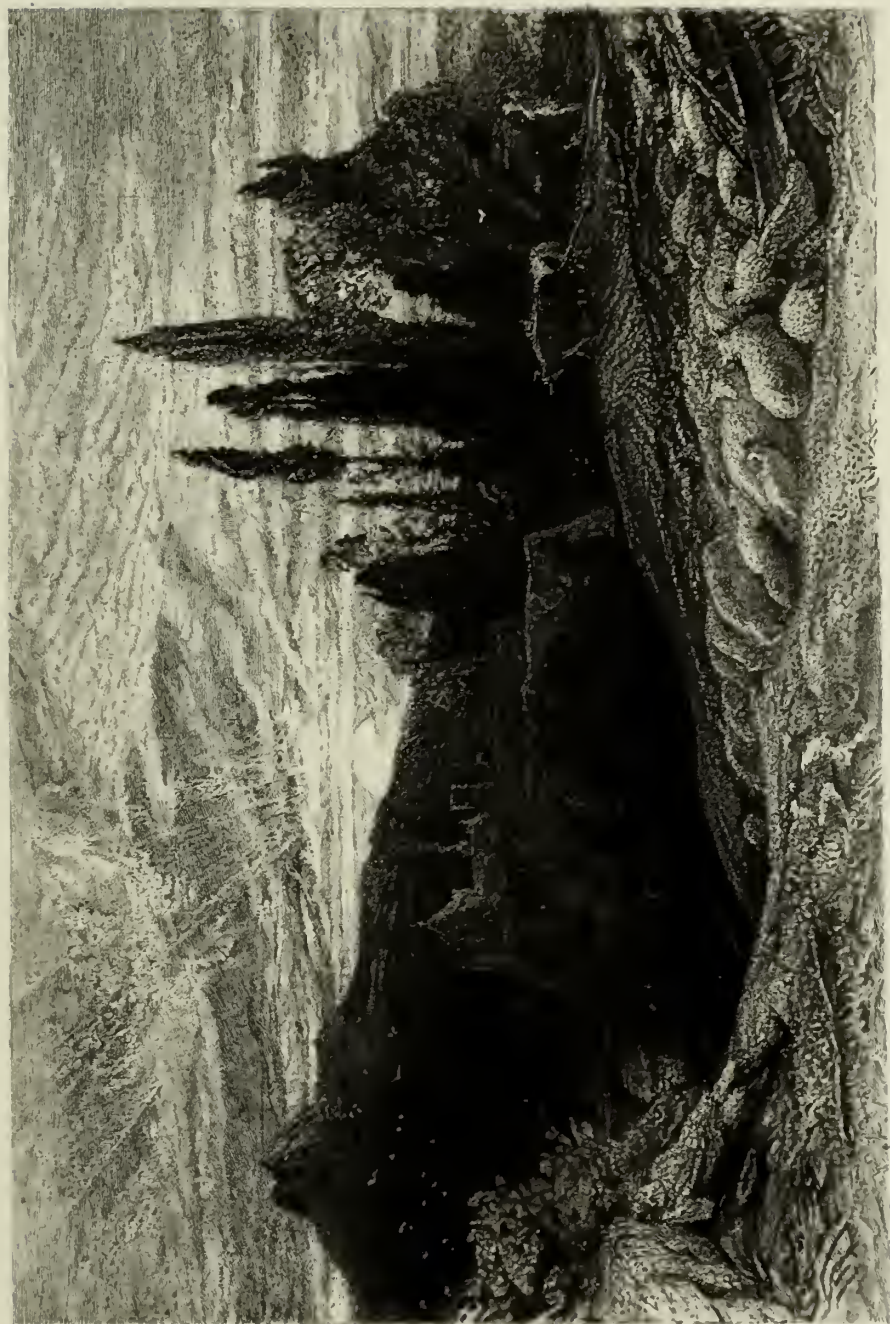
Hoary with tender down, the melting peach
Ere fallen, I will run for you and reach,
And beat the walnut boughs, if more approved
Than chestnuts, which my Amaryllis loved,
And add the waxen plums; with honour due
For flower or fruit or aught that pleases you.
Laurel and myrtle with the flowers we bind;
Their sweetness mingling best when thus entwined.

Hold! Do I wake or dream? And who am I?
A rustic art thou Corydon: too high
For thy regard, cares Galatea nought
For all thy gifts; and if she might be sought
By presents, think'st thou would Iolas yield?
Alas! what have I wish'd, why thus afield
My senses; drifting rather, toward a coast
Of wrecks? O futile, planet-mated, lost;
Listless through all the changeful summer hours,
I have let in the South wind to my flowers,
And wild boars to my limpid fountain heads.

Methinks I see her yet,—and that she dreads
Something pursuing; and like a startled roe
Is gone; bewilder'd fantasies have so
Perplex'd me: who would flee the woodland thus?
In Ida's groves the youth, too amorous,
Won his CEnone's love, and thickest boughs
The gods themselves have shaded: Pallas chose
To dwell august in stately citadels
Herself had built: we love our sylvan cells.

Me the rough chases of this forest please,
Though far from hence the quarry I would seize.
Still the grim lioness the wolf pursues;
The wolf the goat, and sapid boughs amuse,
And flowering cytissus, with endless quest,
The wanton goat, yet roving; more unblest
We wander, beating wide about to find
A phantom, or a shadow, or the wind.

*But see, the weary-pacing oxen, slow,
Homeward from labour'd furrows bring the plough,
Sliding reversed, and the departing sun
Doubles the lengthening shades:—*



*But see, the weary-pacing oxen, slow,
Homeward from laboured furrows bring the plough,
Sliding reversed.*

But see, the weary-pacing oxen, slow,
Homeward from labour'd furrows bring the plough,
Sliding reversed, and the departing sun
Doubles the lengthening shades : the heats have run
Their headlong course, and all things breathe again :
Yet still I burn, and the consuming pain
Nor temperate shade, nor these cool hours remove,
For mean or measure who can set to love ?

Corydon, Corydon, what frenzies thus
Delude thee, hopeless all and ruinous ?
Tangled upon the leafing elm, the vine
Hangs but half pruned : bestir these hands of thine,
With osiers and the pliant rush to weave
Aught that may some small use or profit leave.
It is a craven folly to despair
For one, when many may be found as fair :
Hence they presume, and having tired the rest,
Favour the sorriest and flout the best.
Ere long, if this disdain me, I may find
Another Galatea, less unkind.

ECLOGUE THE THIRD.

THE ARGUMENT.

AFTER some banter which Virgil imitated from Theocritus, Menalcas and Damœtas contend in song, with Palæmon for umpire, who declares them equal.

ECLOGUE THE THIRD.

PALÆMON.

MENALCAS. DAMÆTAS. PALÆMON.

MENALCAS.

TELL me, Damœtas, whose are these, the flock
Of Melibœus ?

DAMÆTAS.

No, 'tis Ægon's stock,
The same he lately trusted me to keep.

MENALCAS.

Always a luckless fold were Ægon's sheep ;
As now, while he, far off, so jealously
Watches Neæra's steps, afraid lest she
May love me better, and his suit refuse
At last ; this hireling keeper drains the ewes
Twice in an hour, makes market of the dams,
And chaffers with the milk filch'd from the lambs.

DAMÆTAS.

Perhaps it were as well to think again,
Ere thus it pleases you to banter men.
Who eased the tumbril of that Chian wine ;
(The driver nodding o'er his tardy kine.)
And no pretence of piety to save,
Hid it within our consecrated cave ;
And hugg'd it so, that at his tipsy dance,

The sheep fled wide, the sour goats leer'd askance;
 And well for him that they should so forbear,
 The easy Nymphs who saw, stood laughing there?

MENALCAS.

Belike 'twas me they saw, about that time,
 With a notch'd billhook villainously climb;
 Spitefully hack the training elms, and tear
 Mycon's new planted vines.

DAMÆTAS.

Or standing here,
 Here by these very beech trees, break the bows
 And shafts of Daphnis, so your envy rose
 And choked you when you saw them given the boy,
 And had you not contrived or to annoy,
 Or some way mischief him, 'tis my belief
 Perverse Menalcas, you had died of grief.

MENALCAS.

What may not masters when their knaves thus dare?
 Oh wicked one, did I not see you snare
 That goat of Damon's, while Lycisca bark'd
 And tugg'd her chain? The struggling prey I mark'd,
 And "Tityrus!" I cried,—“Ho Tityrus, Ho!
 Who is that darting from the copse below?
 Look to your flock and quick!”—You slunk and slid
 Among the bulrushes and there lay hid.

DAMÆTAS.

Wide are the ventures of a valiant tongue:
 That goat was Damon's stake, when last we sung.
 Should he not pay me what my pipe had earn'd
 By softer tones and phrase more featly turn'd?
 If you must know, that very goat was mine:
 So Damon's self confess'd, but yet the fine
 Of his defeat withheld, with some excuse,
 Deferring still what he could not refuse.

MENALCAS.

You sing with Damon! You pipe Damon down!
 Was ever a wax-jointed pipe your own?
 Your whistles, thus to Damon's oat preferr'd,
 The worse for us, we shepherds never heard:
 In cross-ways idling you perhaps we saw,
 Marring some tunelet on a wheezing straw.

DAMÆTAS.

Come then, and learn with whom you have to do;
 Here, on this very ground, I challenge you.
 Come, sit you here, and we will try in turn,
 Each other's mettle, and let losers learn.
 I stake yon milch-cow, no ignoble pawn,
 Lately the fairest heifer of the lawn.
 And know, (that I may tempt you to your fall),
 She serves the dairy and the breeding-stall.
 She, (for your creaming bowls would never fail),
 Twice in the day comes to the milking-pail,
 And feeds two calflings at the udder. Well,
 'Tis now your turn; what you will venture tell.

MENALCAS.

I dare not venture with you from our stock,
 For sons are slaves when stepdames keep the lock;
 I have a sire at home; my stepmother
 Does of all music, chinking gold prefer;
 Nor, if Arion harp'd, would care to lay
 A box-bred squirrel or a popinjay.
 Both parents twice a day number the kine,
 And one of them the kids, and none are mine:
 But since it pleases you to be insane,
 I will stake something, humouring the vein,
 Of value such as you must needs confess
 A yoke of kine, or more, might ill express.

I have two beechen goblets, wrought upon
 With carved-work of divine Alcimedon:
 Light tendrils, chisell'd with an easy skill

Twine all about them; wreaths of ivy fill
 The circuit, sharply cut, and mantle o'er
 The shaded berry-clusters less or more.
 Thus richly set, and in the middle placed,
 Are figures of two ancient men enchased;
 Conon is one, the other,—tell me who
 Was he from whom the nations learn'd to know
 The figure, as his rod described them clear,
 And movements of this universal sphere;
 The changing seasons, and what tokens must
 The reaper mark, the bending ploughman trust?
 These bowls I have not with the lip so much
 As touch'd, but keep them close lest others touch.

DAMÆTAS.

The same Alcimedon also for me
 Two goblets made, and carved so curiously,
 The very handles are all wreathed about
 With soft acanthus: neither cup without
 Its story; Orpheus in the midst he cut,
 And the woods fain to follow: both I put
 Aside, and have not with my lip so much
 As touch'd, my dairy's daily wealth to such
 Preferring: cups yield only as we fill;
 Kine breed, a goblet is a goblet still.

MENALCAS.

Damœtas, you shall not escape to-day;
 Whither you call I come, and I will lay
 A milch-cow too; for me an easy pawn,
 Secure to fetch your breeder from the lawn.
 Only for umpire let—but nought I care:
 Let the first comer judge—him, coming there:
 And lo! it is Palæmon: let him know
 Your mastery; but I will meet you so,
 That never more, when once your song is sung,
 Will you give licence to a saucy tongue.

DAMÆTAS.

That we shall see. Come then, if you are fraught
And ready, no demur of mine shall thwart
Your crazy mood, nor any would I shun
For umpire: but when once we have begun,
Neighbour Palæmon give your utmost heed;
Our venture is no trifling one indeed.

PALÆMON.

Sing then, for song beseems the springing year,
As in the shade we sit together here,
On the soft grass. See how the pregnant earth
In painless labour yields her lavish birth.
Now every mead is flush'd, now every spray
With flowers or bloom: in this blithe holiday
Of all the year shall voice or verse be dull?
Of amorous birds when leafing woods are full;
When boughs at morris with the breezes sing,
And she once mute is all night carolling,
Be never shepherd's reed disused and sere.
Sing then, for song beseems the springing year.
Begin, Damætas. You, Menalcas, know
Kindling with each response, how verse may glow:
Thus in old Amœbean mood prolong
The notes: the Muses love alternate song.

DAMÆTAS.

Muses, from your great Sire begin the strain;
He cherishes the lands with timely rain
Or genial heat: he will regard my theme,
Though slight, the music of a shepherd's dream.
The poet's trance is peopled from above,
And all things teem with universal Jove.

MENALCAS.

My verse not Jove alone permits, but he
Whose offerings, his own gift, are still with me.
Me Phœbus loves, for I have early strown

His altars, ere his coming, with his own
Laurel and with the softly blushing hue
Of hyacinth early pluck'd and wet with dew.

DAMÆTAS.

Hid in the tree, and gathering apples there,
Who is it pelts me as I venture near?
'Tis my own Galatea lightly drops,
Then, laughing, runs into the hazel copse;
Yet ere she vanishes among the green,
For all her haste, would not be quite unseen. .

MENALCAS.

But my true love Alcippe to our farm
Many a day comes, and modest, thinks no harm;
But with my sister vine-dressing will go,
Haying or milking; and our watch-dogs know
Her footfall easily as Delia's tread
About the orchard or the dairy-stead.

DAMÆTAS.

What gifts I keep for thee, where hid away,
Guess, rural Venus, or what offering say
Of gentlest kind, might please a gentle heart?
I saw, where in a beechen glade apart,
Aërial ring-doves poise their scanty nest:
A pair shall murmur on thy softer breast.

MENALCAS.

Ten wild pomegranates I have sent my fair,
All that I could, but golden as her hair:
By this time others, burnish'd in the sun,
Are ripe to dropping; lightly I will run
To the hill side, and from the sylvan store,
To-morrow of the plumpest send her more.

'Tis gentle Phillis I love best of all,
For when I left, some tears began to fall;
"Adieu!" she said, while her loose tresses fell
About me, "Charming boy, a long farewell!"



'Tis gentle Phillis I love best of all,
For when I left, some tears began to fall.

DAMÆTAS.

But O how often and what tender things,
Would Galatea say! Winds, on your wings,
Bear part, but only part, to ears divine,
Lest gods be jealous; thus you seal her mine.

MENALCAS.

To share each other's perils friends are born,
Amyntas, and a timid friend we scorn:
What boots it that I keep the nets, nor gride
The sudden boar whose tusks are at your side?

DAMÆTAS.

This is my birthday, bid my Phillis come,
Iolas: when the ancient bounds we sum,
And for the crops, I give with honours due,
A calf to liberal Ceres, then come you.

MENALCAS.

'Tis gentle Phillis I love best of all,
For when I left, some tears began to fall;
"Adieu!" she said, while her loose tresses fell
About me, "Charming boy, a long farewell!"

DAMÆTAS.

Wind, wolves and rain afflict the trees, the fold,
The orchard; me the clamours of a scold,
And Amaryllis on her stormy days.

MENALCAS.

Showers to sown land, to kids the arbut sprays
Are sweet; to pregnant ewes the willow grove:
To me, what else than my Alcippe's love?

DAMÆTAS.

Pierian maids, the comeliest heifer feed
For whom I name, that ever cropp'd the mead.

Pollio, though she be rustic, loves my muse,
E'en Pollio's self, who nobler verse can use.

MENALCAS.

Nay, but for him a dewlapp'd bull be fed
That butts already with his horny head,
Beats with his hoof and spurns the sand along :
Pollio indites a new heroic song.

DAMÆTAS.

Who loves thee, and delights to see thee crown'd
With honours, Pollio, such to him redound ;
For him let wine and nectar'd honey flow,
His brambles with Armenian spices glow.

MENALCAS.

O Mævius, may the man,—he can no worse,
Your own admire, who hates not Bavius' verse :
Yoke foxes to the plough ; follow the tail,
Then winnow stubble with a sounding flail.

DAMÆTAS.

Young swains who pluck each floweret ere it dies
And stoop so low for the wild strawberries,
Hence ! for a cold snake lurks among the grass.

MENALCAS.

My sheep, too near the slippery bank you pass.
The ram himself strove hard to breast the tide
And shakes his ample fleece, yet scarcely dried.

DAMÆTAS.

Tityrus, my feeding goats ward from the stream,
For I, in the due season, all of them
Will wash, and near the limpid fountain-head.

MENALCAS.

Swains, drive the ewes to shade; their milk, once sped,
For no moist lenitive or cooling balm
Will flow, nor ever teat be press'd of palm.

DAMÆTAS.

Yonder, alas! how lean my stately bull
In a fat field! 'Tis love, unpitiful
Alike to herds and masters of the herd.

MENALCAS.

And these my tender lambs, what eye hath leer'd
Askance at them; what evil chance foredone?
But see!—almost we have sung down the sun.

DAMÆTAS.

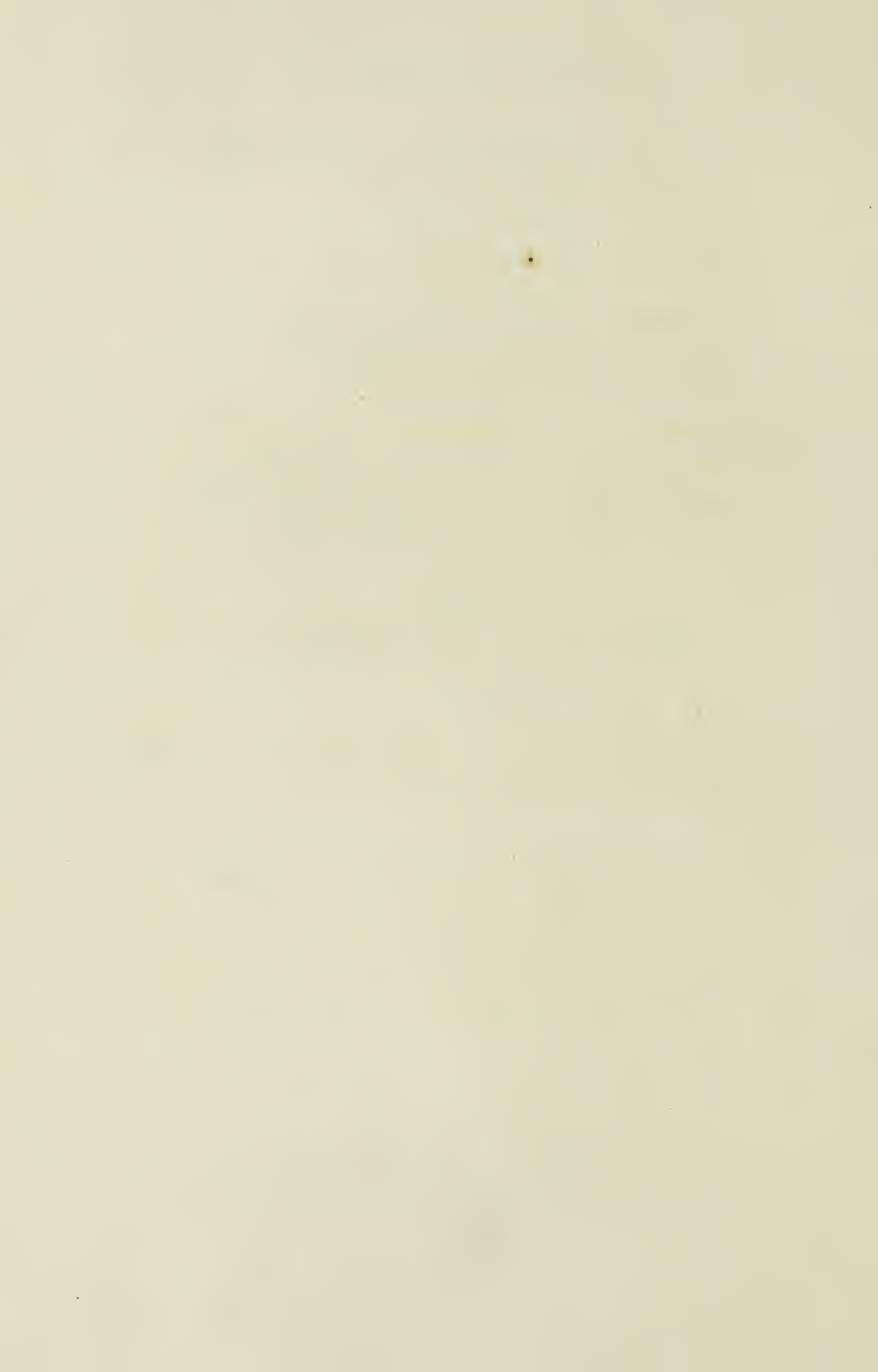
If you would be my great Apollo, tell
Where heaven itself is spann'd with thrice an ell.

MENALCAS.

Where flowers inscribed with names of kings are known,
But guess, and then take Phillis for your own.

PALÆMON.

Stay, shepherds, stay: if Phillis be your stake,
Some bolder swain than I th' award must make.
The balance nicely poised between you lies;
Both sing so well that neither wins the prize.
Equal in song, your ancient taunts forbear,
Lest what was meant to sting be found to tear.
Much you deserve, Menalcas, he no less,
And much will any who can best express
The quick misgivings plighted bosoms prove,
Or the dry pangs of unrequited love.
Now shut the sluices, for the thirsty mead
Is well refresh'd, and cooler hours succeed.



ECLOGUE THE FOURTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS Eclogue predicts a physical and moral renovation of the world. Virgil declares a new era to be at hand, which had been foretold in Sibylline verse as the last age: a new progeny would be sent from heaven, and a marvellous change wrought in the conditions of soil and climate, and in the hearts of men: the earth yielding her fruits without laborious culture; peace and equity taking the place of violence and fraud. This was to begin during the rule of some just person, born in the consulate of Pollio.

Here the prediction failed; but of such a ruler, there was then a general expectation, and the next age beheld the Divine Advent. One of the Fathers numbers Virgil among the prophets, nor does St. Augustine refuse to the Erythræan Sibyl a place in the City of God.

In the *Pollio*, and in passages of the Hebrew prophets, the identity of what is foretold is even more remarkable than the poetic resemblance; and knowing some, we are drawn on to conjecture, perhaps to dream of other sources, which may have afforded to Virgil, the Poet of Peace, an antepast of the Final Restitution.

ECLOGUE THE FOURTH.

POLLIO.

SICILIAN Muses, may we dare to sing
In loftier numbers to the quivering string?
Some souls there are who little heed or love
The lowly tamarisk or the vintage grove;
Yet, if we haunt the woodlands, let them bear
No trivial echo to our Consul's ear,
But solemn notes befitting this great shade,
By hoary tetrarchs of the forest made.

At last they dawn; those latter days, so long
Prefigured in the old Cumæan song:
Fresh as the dew of earth's primeval morn,
Of this great series the first age is born:
The lost Astræa greeting us again,
The olive, and the just Saturnian reign:
Already the first fruit is largely given,
And a new progeny descends from heaven,
The links of iron ages to destroy,
(Thou, virgin ever helpful, speed the boy)
And with a golden race to fill the way
From Nile to Thule: give him to the day,
Purest Lucina: circling time explains
The Sibyl, and thy own Apollo reigns.
This, Pollio's favour'd consulate must prove,
Whence the great calends will begin to move,
And fraud, at his rebuke, and malice fled,
Release the nations from perpetual dread.
The youth himself will their divinity

Partake, when gods and heroes he shall see,
And they, intent, his providence regard,
The while, with gentle sway and just award,
And all his father's virtues newly tried,
An ever troubled world is pacified.

Now, fairest boy, will the new-teeming earth
No culture wait, but pour to make thee mirth,
As toys of off'ring she can soonest bear,
Wild nard and errant ivy everywhere,
And with th' Egyptian lily twined in play,
Laughing acanthus : now the ewes will stray
Untended, and at eve the goats come home
Heavy with fragrant milk : the herds may roam
Loosely at will, nor ever need to fear
In thickets the great lion crouching near.

Thy very cradle quickens, osiers loose
To tendrils turn, with flowery shoots diffuse :
A softer couch the thymy ground puts forth,
Nor lavish blossom dreads the sudden North.
The serpent now shall die, and the false weed
Of poison die, each healing leaf succeed ;
Common as grass, the balm of Syria give
Her fragrance, and the sick who taste shall live.

Nor later than the day when thou canst read
Of heroes, busy with each generous deed
Thy father wrought, thus early bent to learn
What strenuous virtue dares, the field will turn
To gold, with the soft beards of ripening corn,
Grape clusters mellow on th' uncultured thorn,
Hard oaks with dew-like honey fill the bough.
Yet ancient policy may tempt e'en now
With fleets the fickle Thetis, may surround
Cities with walls, with furrows cleave the ground ;
Heroes a Tiphys or an Argo bear,
Another Troy some great Achilles fear :
But, as thy triumphs with thy years increase,
Thy shafts, persuasive truth, thy triumph, peace,
Traders themselves will haul the bark ashore,

*Thy very cradle quickens, osiers loose
To tendrils turn, with flowery shoots diffuse :
A softer couch the thymy ground puts forth,
Nor lavish blossom dreads the sudden North.*



*Hy very cradle quickens, osiers loose
To tendrils turn, with flowery shoots diffuse.*

The nautic pine her barter'd wares no more
Unload ; each clime, as genial as the rest,
In affluence of its own, completely blest.

No harrows then the generous glebe will brook,
Nor purple vintages the pruning-hook ;
The sturdy ploughman from his oxen now
Loosens the yoke ; no fallows need the plough ;
Nor shall the snowy fleeces learn to lie
With many a hue of counterfeiting dye ;
But o'er the mead the ram himself bear wool
Or of a softly blushing purple full,
Or saffron ; either shall spontaneous grow,
And feeding lambs in Syrian tinctures glow :

Fate has decreed, the *Parcæ* have approved,
And with one voice have said, divinely moved,
Roll on, blest ages, and from change secure,
And chance, let peace and equity endure.

Dear offspring of the gods and our best love,
Great increase of the all-prolific Jove,
Assume thy honours and complete our bliss.
The time already hastens, and for this,
The world, though nodding with its ponderous round,
The lands, the tracts of ocean, heaven profound,
Together as in youthful prime rejoice,
And lean and hearken for thy sovereign voice.

O that through lengthen'd years my breath may last,
(By no dull vapours wiser age o'ercast),
If only, moved by thee, I may rehearse
Thy story in imperishable verse ;
Linus nor Orpheus may with such contend,
This, though his mother, that, the sire befriend ;
Calliope with her sad Thracian sing,
Or Linus, prompted by the Delian string :
Pan, even Pan, if he would deign to try,
Arcadia judging, still the mastery
Must yield : the voice alone were mine ; from heaven
The theme and the inspiring impulse given.

Begin, thou little child, begin the while,
Thy mother to distinguish by her smile :
Ten were the weary months for thee she bore ;
She clasps her boy and thinks of them no more :
Begin thy mother by her smile to know,
And those love-quicken'd eyes that watch thee so :
The son who may not these endearments prove
Nor gods will honour nor a goddess love.

ECLOGUE THE FIFTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

MOPSUS laments the death, Menalcas sings the apotheosis of Daphnis, who represents, it would seem, some illustrious person, probably Julius Cæsar.

If this be so, a curious significance, a kind of tacit satire upon war, underlies the whole poem, in which no pastoral combat with bear or wolf, or other imagery or illusion indicates the soldiership of the world's greatest captain ; while the better parts of his nature, clemency and benevolence, are deified ; virtues which, undisplaced by more violent impulses, would render war impossible.

ECLOGUE THE FIFTH.

DAPHNIS

MENALCAS. MOPSUS.

MENALCAS.

SINCE thus we chance to meet, both skill'd in song,
Light reeds to ply or storied verse prolong,
What hinders now a carol in the shade
These elms and arching hazel boughs have made?

MOPSUS.

'Tis you, the elder, who must choose. Which way,
Menalcas? where th' uncertain shadows play,
Moved by the West, or heifer-tracks incline
To yonder cavern? see how that wild vine
Sprinkles it with a scanty clustering.

MENALCAS.

We from our hills, can but Amyntas bring
To pair with you.

MOPSUS.

Perhaps he would not bend
So low, but may with Phœbus' self contend!

MENALCAS.

Mopsus, do you begin: have you no lays
Of Phillis' passion or of Alcon's praise;
Of Codrus' quarrel and the battle-shock?
Begin, for Tityrus will keep the flock.

ECLOGUE THE FIFTH.

MOPSUS.

This rather would I try, scored on the rind
 Of beech trees, as I could the numbers find,
 Noted by turns and sung: then you may tell
 Amyntas he will soon my verse excel.

MENALCAS.

Nay but his tuneful reed must yet defer
 To yours, as to the rose, wild lavender,
 Willow to olive.

MOPSUS.

Cease, for we are now,
 (Apt is the gloom), beneath the cavern's brow.

Untimely lost, and by a cruel death,
 The Nymphs their Daphnis mourn'd with faltering breath.
 O bowers of hazel, waters murmuring hoarse,
 Ye heard that mother's cry: she, the dear corse
 Embracing in a long, a last caress,
 Planets and gods rebuked as pitiless.

And all that time the stricken neighbourhood
 Of hinds and shepherds tranced in sorrow stood,
 Nor hither cared to stir nor thither look;
 None drove the stall-fed oxen to the brook;
 The thirsty horse forsook the river-side,
 And left the dainty meadow-grass untried.

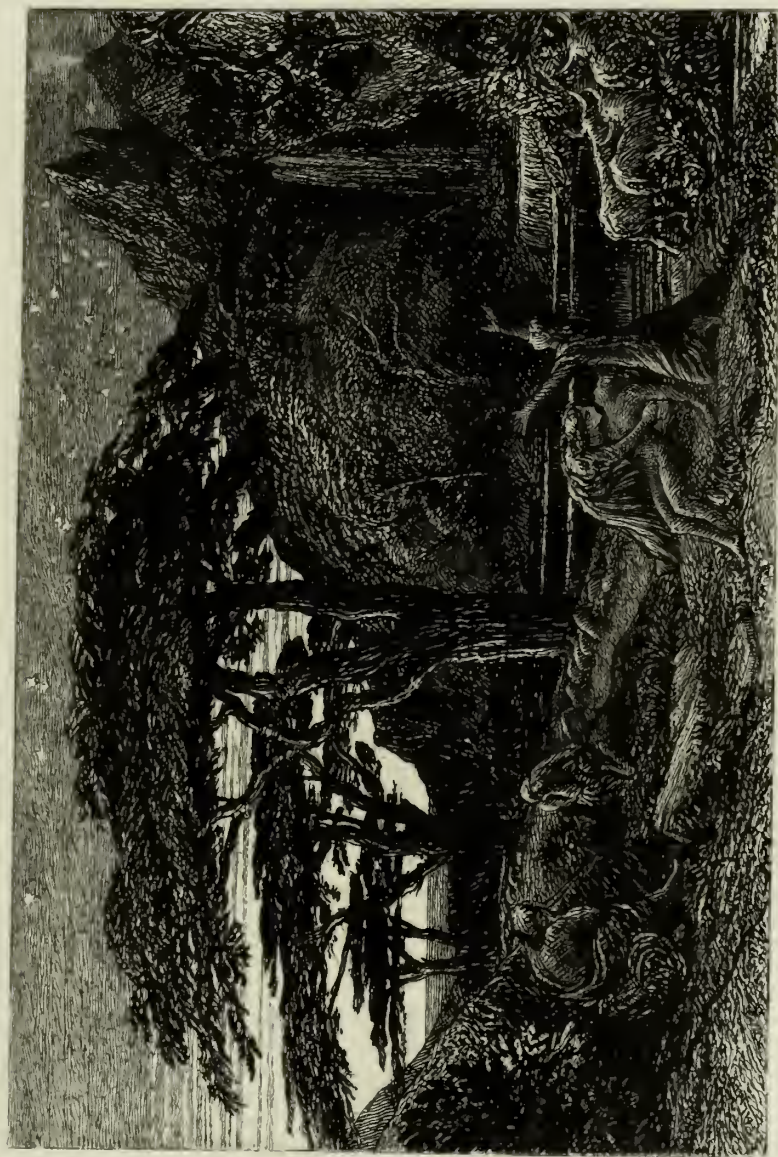
On Libya's waste there is a sullen roar,
 Rough lions, as they can, his death deplore,
 And all our forest-bearing mountains heard
 Their caverns with unwonted murmur stirr'd.

We saw when Daphnis to the chariot yoked
 Armenian tigers and with us invoked
 Great Bacchus, leading forth the stately dance
 And chorus: Daphnis twined the pliant lance
 With ivy; he, our grace and ornament,
 Beloved in life, and mourn'd with long lament.

As vines the elm, clusters the vine adorn,
 As bulls the herd, the furrows ripening corn,

K

Untimely lost, and by a cruel death,
The Nymphs their Daphnis mourn'd with faltering breath.
O bowers of hazel, waters murmuring hoarse,
Ye heard that mother's cry : she, the dear corse
Embracing in a long, a last caress,
Planets and gods rebuked as pitiless.



*Untimely lost, and by a cruel death,
The Nymphs their Daphnis mourn'd with faltering breath.*

So were thy favour and sweet confidence
 Our grace and honour, and these taken hence,
 Pales forsook the crops and garner-store,
 And bright Apollo loved our fields no more.
 For now the furrows, with plump barley sown,
 Have darnel and the scrannel oat o'ergrown;
 Purple Narcissus and soft violet bloom
 No more, perplex'd with thorny scrubs and broom.
 Bestrew the ground with leaves, with boughs o'ershade
 The fountains; he would have these honours paid;
 And let us build a sylvan monument,
 And briefly thus with sylvan verse indent:
 Fair flocks the fairer Daphnis pastured here,
 But his renown to every shepherd dear,
 Rose in our grateful carols from each grove,
 And went before him to the stars above.

MENALCAS.

Thy numbers, heavenly poet, all surpass,
 Grateful as sleep to pilgrims on the grass,
 Or, leaping from the rock, a virgin rill
 To thirsty reapers as they drink their fill.
 Thy master's equal, or with voice or reed,
 When his are silent, long may thine succeed:
 Yet, as it can, my voice in turn shall rise
 To lift our Daphnis to the starry skies:
 O let us bear him to the stars, approved
 In grateful verse: me also Daphnis loved.

MOPSUS.

What could I more desire, and from a tongue
 So skilful, he so worthy to be sung,
 Than thus to hear a descant long deferr'd
 And praised erewhile by Stimicon who heard?

MENALCAS.

Resplendent now the wondering Daphnis tries
 Olympus' threshold, and upon our skies

Looks down, and sees the stars beneath his feet.
Therefore, with lively joy, the Dryads fleet
Haste hither; Pan is hastening, and the maids
And hinds and shepherds from the farthest glades.
The very wolves forbear the fleecy spoil,
The antler'd foresters no meshes toil,
For quiet-loving Daphnis bids this peace
From heaven, and fraud and brutish rapine cease.

The unshorn mountains sing; the rugged bars
Of granite throw their voices to the stars:
"A God!" they cry;—"A God!" the vineyards broad
Resound—Menalcas, Daphnis is a God!

O be thou ever bountiful to us,
To us thy own: for see, already thus
We call thee:—see that smoke of incense rise
From four fair altars; two of sacrifice
For Phœbus, but the other stones are thine.
Yearly two milk-bowls, frothing from the kine,
Two jars of the fat olive shall be set:
And when the shepherds from the downs are met
In merry wake and maiden festival,
Blithe for my Daphnis' holiday, I shall,
In winter, where the crackling fagots blaze,
Beneath a sylvan shade in harvest days,
With a new nectar crown the plenteous fare,
Nor brimming cups of princely Chian spare.
Then, "Daphnis," "Daphnis," through the choir shall ring,
Damœtas and the Lyctian Ægon sing;
Alphesibœus bear the ivied lance,
Or show us how the nimble satyrs dance;
These honours always thine, or when we yield
The Nymphs their due, or victims bound the field.

While fish love rivers, boars the mountain climb,
Balm-cricket feed on dew and bees on thyme,
Always these honours, and thy name beloved,
And praises shall remain: with vows approved,
Like those to Bacchus or to Ceres given,
Husbandmen pray, and thou regard from heaven.

MOPSUS.

What can I give thee—how, for such a song,
Make due return? My best would do thee wrong:
For not such music o'er the blossom'd sprays,
The rising South with fitful impulse plays;
Nor wave, roll'd after wave, along the strand
In solemn measure as it beats the sand,
Nor down their stony channels brooks that ply,
Murmuring or chafed, a pleasing melody.

MENALCAS.

But first accept this brittle pipe; it play'd
Of Tityrus happy in the beechen shade,
And taught the measures of Neæra's lay,
"Are these the Melibœan flocks astray?"

MOPSUS.

Nor, comely with its equal knots and brass,
Do thou this crook refuse, which oft, alas!
Antigenes besought for; I, unmoved
Withheld, though he was worthy to be loved.

ECLOGUE THE SIXTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

SILENUS is bound in his sleep by Chromis and Mnasyllus, impatient for the song which he often promised. Awaking, he laughs at their device, and being set free, sings the origin of all things, the formation of the earth, and legends of hoary antiquity : but the compliment to Gallus, who appears in poetic procession between the sisters of Phaëton and the daughter of Nisus, made the scene and the song of Silenus a thing of yesterday. Thus perhaps, some were cavilling, when Cicero discerned in the inventor ‘*Magnæ spes altera Romæ.*’

The successive order of creation, though described with some Lucretian phrases, agrees with the Inspired Narrative : the gathering of the waters into one place and the appearance of dry land are identical. There is no hint of fortuitous concurrence, the last folly which poetic decorum would suffer in the utterance of a demi-god.

The introduction glances at the hasty ephemeral poets and parasites of the time. Veiled a little by the admonition of Apollo, the lofty sarcasm will be perceived, with which Virgil declines to venture upon the epics of the last bulletin, and retires with a ‘slender reed’ to sing the creation of the universe.

Addressing the masters of war in the flush of their success, he deprecated their baleful trade ; medicating his flattery with persuasives to lenity and justice, and exploring all the resources of his art, to ennoble labour and the institutions of peace.

ECLOGUE THE SIXTH.

SILENUS.

IN these Hesperian pastures to commerce,
Disporting with the wild Sicilian verse,
First my Thalia deign'd, nor blush'd to tell
Our echoing hills their shade was loved so well.
A loftier vein too early had I tried,
Of battles won and heroes deified ;
But Cynthia touch'd my ear and thus reproved ;
"O Tityrus, whither has my shepherd roved ?
'Tis his to feed and fold the lusty sheep,
A gentler mean his Doric flute should keep."

Varus, while now th' obsequious many haste,
(For obvious things are all that they can taste),
Stirr'd with the news, thy battles to recount,
And suddenly in swelling verse to mount,
Me it beseems to dwell apart, and muse
Remote from noise, nor slender reeds refuse.

I not unbidden sing ; if any heed
This verse, if any touch'd with love shall read,
To them, our tamarisk, Varus, and each grove
Will sing of thee, nor aught can Phœbus love
More than the scroll prefix'd with Varus' name.

Muses begin ! The young Mnasyllus came
With Chromis to a cave, and chanced to find,
In a deep sleep Silenus there reclined ;
Full vein'd and rife with wine of yesterday.
Fall'n from his ample brow, his chaplet lay
Distwined upon the ground, and near him, slung
By its worn ear, his heavy flagon hung.

But Chromis and Mnasyllus he had long
Deluded with the promise of a song :
So now, with stealthy tread they nearer creep,
And with his own wreaths bind him in his sleep :
But while they scarce believe what they have done,
And each at other glancing, fears to run
Or stay, who on a sudden should appear,
But frolic Ægle, chancing to pass there :
Fair Ægle, loveliest of the Naiades.
She, at a glance, the tempting mischief sees ;
Trips to the cavern, and without demur,
Just as the dreamy god begins to stir,
Paints his broad forehead and his kindly eyes
With handfuls press'd of sanguine mulberries.

Silenus, laughing at the fraud, demands
“Why do you bind me with these leafy strands ?
Enough to see me thus : now loose me, boys
Audacious ; disentwine these flowery toys,
And hearken to the song for which you plead,
For you the song, a kiss will be her meed.”

Then he began, and you might see the Fauns,
And the wild creatures of the forest-lawns,
In mazy dances to his numbers play,
And rigid oaks their tops in concert sway.
His cloven rock in Phœbus does not more
Delight ; in Orpheus' harp the Thracian shore,
Vine-cover'd Ismarus and Rhodope :
For through the empty vast, by firm decree,
How first the pregnant seeds of earth and air,
Seas and ethereal fire were gather'd there,
He sang ; whence all things open'd that appear
In circling space : and how the tender sphere
Of this our world condensed, and slowly then
Hard'ning, the jutting land, from cape or fen,
Shut Nereus off to tend the deeper springs,
By just degrees taking the forms of things
After their kind ; and while they yet might seem
As under brooding shadowy wings to dream,

Burst the new sunbeams on the dazzled earth,
And clouds from lifted vapour shower'd the dearth.

Forests begin to rise, and here and there,
From reedy covert and the sylvan lair,
New living creatures their demesne explore
Of nameless mountains and uncharted shore.
Then Pyrrha's transit o'er the watery waste,
The stones, as Themis taught, behind her cast ;
Saturnian realms, the joy of youthful time,
The birds of Caucasus and fraud sublime.

He adds the story of that fountain-brim
Where Hylas bent : his sea-mates roam for him
The haunted bay, and "Hylas ! Hylas !" call.
And the rocks echo, till, at even-fall,
They weigh for Colchis. From the hollow strand
More fleetly borne, he touches Cretan land ;
With Crete deplores the frenzy of her queen.
Ah ! fortunate if herds had never been,
Nor thou with baser fantasy possess'd
Than Prætus' maids, by Juno's wrath distress'd,
Who hear amiss, as if their voices were
The low of kine, and thence a change infer :
Explore their brows which modest locks adorn,
With timid finger for the sprouting horn ;
The ploughman's yoke upon their shoulders dread,
And still to hear behind, his heavy tread.

Ah whither o'er the mountains dost thou roam ?
In oaken shade he ruminates at home
The blanching herb ; upon soft hyacinth stays
His snowy side, or near some favourite strays,
New pastures with the roving herd to browse.
Enough we dream : come Nymphs of Dicte, close
The forest-leaps, and let us to the brake,
To stir the boar, the flying hart o'ertake.

Silenus, next, the tale of Scyros taught ;
The girl by those Hesperian apples caught.
Now from their long lament the sisters cease,
For Phaeton the sad Heliades,

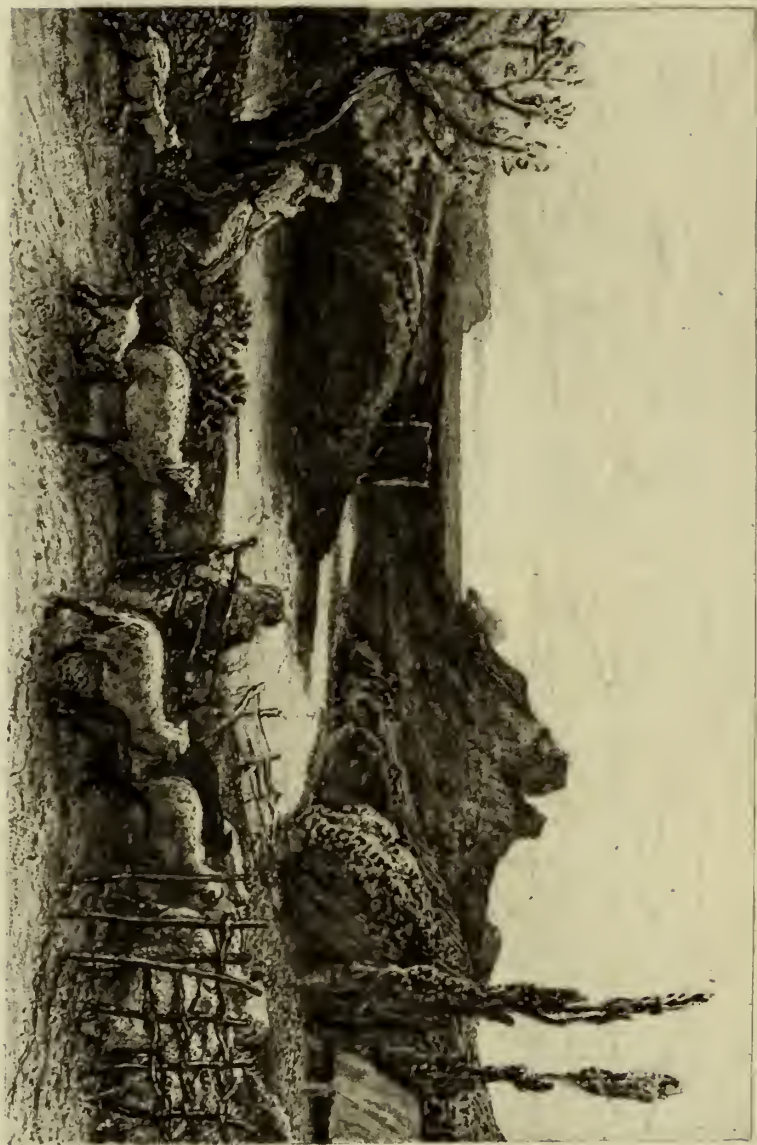
And in the winding melody swathed round
With moss of bitter bark, change with the sound
To stately alders. Presently he sings
Of Gallus, wandering by Permessus' springs,
Whom one of the immortal sisters led
Far on, to that Aonian mountain-head.
They saw the man, and all the sacred choir
Rose up to do him honour, and the sire
Who led his flock in Chalcis standing there,
(Flowers and the bitter parsley bound his hair),
Linus bespake him thus in song divine :

“These reeds the Muses give thee, they are thine.
Nay, take them ! On the very same once play'd
The Ascræan old, and with their music made
The stout oaks quiver ; at his cheery voice
Rough glens and stony summits would rejoice,
And stubborn ash trees bend them to the plain.
Wake the light quills and mellow stops again,
To tell how Gryno's planted vistas thrive :
Than hers, no shrine may Phœbus better love ;
No song than thine, of fane and oracle,
Of marbled grove, or cave, or sacred well.”

With soft or stately, plaintive notes or gay,
Thus bountiful Silenus fill'd the day.
Why should we tell (she greets the morning air),
How Nisan Scylla pluck'd the purple hair ;
Or her dread namesake, girt about the waist
With monsters barking for a foul repast,
Vex'd the Dulichian fleet, as legends tell :
How for the mariners her sea-dogs yell ;
Snatch them as from the broken craft they leap,
And gnaw their quivering members in the deep ?

The time would fail to tell how he portray'd
That limber thing of shrunken Tereus made ;
The gifts for him which Philomela brought ;
The banquet : then with what a flight he sought
The utmost desert, and with wings new grown,
Flutter'd above the roof so late his own.

—— till Vesper bade the swain
Number his flocks and stall them from the dew,
And then from the reluctant skies withdrew.



"—till Vesper bade the swain
Number his flocks and stall them from the den,
And then from the reluctant skies withdraw:"

But all that Phœbus mused, and long of yore
Eurotas heard, and taught his laurell'd shore,
All these he sang; these did the echoing plain
Repeat to heaven, till Vesper bade the swain
Number his flocks and stall them from the dew,
And then from the reluctant skies withdrew.

ECLOGUE THE SEVENTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

MELIBŒUS repeats the alternate song of Corydon and Thyrsis, which he had heard in company with Daphnis.

ECLOGUE THE SEVENTH.

MELIBŒUS.

MELIBŒUS. CORYDON. THYRSIS.

MELIBŒUS.

BENEATH a holm, that in the merry spring,
With playful Zephyrus was whispering,
Daphnis had chanced to sit him down in shade;
And everywhere about the chequer'd glade,
The goats were frolicking, in shade or sheen,
And sporting lambs among the glad light green :
For Corydon and Thyrsis in the dawn
Had met, and now, to talk away the morn,
Had driven their flocks together into one ;
Thyrsis, the sheep, his ewe-goats, Corydon ;
His ewes, now heavy for the milking time :
And both the ruddy youths were in their prime :
Arcadians both ; in link'd variety,
Skilful the quick-responsive verse to ply.

I lighted on them, seeking for a goat
That stray'd away : mine wander'd loose about,
For I was busy when they left the fold,
Fencing the new set myrtles from the cold.
But this was the most comely of my stock,
The bearded sire and monarch of the flock ;
And beating wide about through brake or dell,
By sounds of bleating led or wether-bell,
There on a sudden, Daphnis I espied ;
And me no sooner Daphnis, than he cried,
“ Haste hither, Melibœus, why so slow ?

Your kids and goat are safe with ours below ;
 And you will say 'twas fortunate, the quest
 That brought you timely hither : sit and rest ;
 And ere we rise such music you will hear,
 As falls not often upon shepherd's ear.
 Your heifers of themselves will come this way,
 Over the meads to drink, nor farther stray
 Than to the aspen-poplar's silver shade,
 Ere yet the slanting fervour spares the glade.
 Green Mincius here hath with a flow'ry brede
 Purfl'd his banks, or fringed with tender reed ;
 And from the sacred oak we hear the swarm
 Innum'rous, murmur soft a drowsy charm."

What should I do ? for no Alcippe penn'd
 My weanlings, Phillis I had none to trend
 From evening dew to the warm straw-yard thatch
 My crowding lambs : yet this was a great match,
 Thyrsis with Corydon : so I deferr'd
 My business for their play ; sat still and heard
 Responsive notes erelong begin to swell,
 That ever strangely sweet in memory dwell :
 (For what they sang the Muses bade me learn),
 These Corydon's, of Thyrsis those in turn.

CORYDON.

Nymphs whom I love, from your Libethrian cave
 Yield me such aid as you my Codrus gave :
 His, for sweet verse, is next to Phœbus' name :
 Else, if we may not all drink from the same
 Pure fountain, loth must I this reed resign
 To hang distuned upon the sacred pine.

THYRSIS.

Haste hither, blithe with flute and forest horn,
 Arcadian shepherds, hasten to adorn
 Your poet here fast ripening : weave a crown
 Of ivy berries likest to your own,

*Come, fairest, if thou care for me at all;
Nor later than the pastured bulls to stall
Wind hitherward along the dewy glade,
Ere yet, afar, the rosy mountains fade.*



— the pastured bulls to stall
Wind hitherward along the dewy glade,
Ere yet, afar, the rosy mountains fade.

But if my easy-flowing verse be such,
As Codrus, envy-bit, may praise too much,
Leering askance, O quickly bind my brow
With lady-glove, and disenchant me so
From malice of the evil eye or tongue,
Else, my best carols may be left unsung.

CORYDON.

Delia, fleet huntress, lo! this wild-boar's head,
These many-branching antlers nobly spread,
The little Mycon brings : long-lived was he
That bore them, in his forest fastness free ;
And deep in fern, full many an autumn-fall,
Startled the dappled bevy with his call.
My bow and lance thus prosper'd, thou shalt stand
At full length here, in chisell'd marble ; spann'd
About the ankle with no meaner tie,
Nor buskin'd but in polish'd porphyry.

THYRSIS.

These might suffice, and from no grudging soul,
These cakes, Priapus, with the annual bowl,
For a poor garden ; yet I have thee, nay
In Parian marble, this my first essay :
But when the tottering lambs my barn-yard fill,
Then crop the orchard grass beside the rill ;
Thy image shall be cast in molten gold.
Promise is cheap, and fortune hugs the bold.

CORYDON.

Nereian Galatea, thou more white
Than swans, than shoots of silver ivy light
And comely ; sweet as Hybla's thyme, and gay
As dancing sunbeams with the waves at play ;
Come, fairest, if thou care for me at all ;
Nor later than the pastured bulls to stall
Wind hitherward along the dewy glade,
Ere yet, afar, the rosy mountains fade.

THYRSIS.

Nay, but if this day's light, till thou be here,
 I find less tedious than a rounded year,
 Henceforth may I more bitter seem to thee
 Than Sardine Crowfoot, rough as gorse may be ;
 Viler than refuse weed the surges heap
 Ashore and leave, once purple in the deep.
 Go home, well batten'd heifers ; if you know,
 Or shame or measure in your feeding, go.

CORYDON.

Caves and moss-cradled fountains, grass more soft
 Than sleep ; and thou green arbut, all the croft
 Refreshing with an interlacing play
 Of shadowy morris, when this breezy May
 Is past, O shelter well my flocks at noon ;
 For torrid summer comes with change of moon,
 And vine buds, for the next year's gathering,
 Are swelling in the glad young shoots of spring.

THYRSIS.

Here with fat logs heap'd up for winter store,
 Plenty as heart could wish, our fagots roar :
 With smoke the groins and girders always black,
 And boar's chine seasoning in the chimney rack,
 We care as much for the North wind or frost,
 As wolves for number of the fleecy host,
 Or mountain torrent for its bank, when first
 O'er granite peaks a lowering cloud has burst.

CORYDON.

Chestnuts and junipers are plentiful,
 Brown Autumn showers the ground, and we may cull
 From nectar-laden boughs the mellowest pear ;
 The mulberry and dropping plum lie there,
 Strown each beneath its tree ; vineyards resound
 With song, and jocund plenty laughs around :
 But if the beautiful Alcippe shun
 These hills, the very streams will cease to run.

THYRSIS.

The land is parch'd, the flowers and each green thing
Discolour'd and athirst, are withering,
Are dying in the stifled air : the rills
Are spent, and Bacchus too has grudged our hills
Their purple shade ; but Phillis comes again !
And see ! the hills, the pasture and the grain
Revive, and the prolific Jove once more
Descends abundant in a gladdening show'r.

CORYDON.

The poplar of all trees Alcides loves,
Vines Bacchus, the fair Paphian, myrtle groves ;
His laurel, Cynthus, but my Phillis, most
The hazel : oft, with crook and basket, lost
Among the rustling boughs, she plucks for me
Ripe filberts : charming Phillis loves the tree,
Playfully with the clusters binds her hair ;
Poplar nor myrtle may with this compare.

THYRSIS.

The ash tree is the lady of the wood,
Though poplars glass themselves in Mincius' flood,
And silver birches grace the hills unshorn.
The terraced garden stately pines adorn.
Yet beautiful Lycoris, if but you
Still visit me, nor make the hours too few,
Neither the poplar, nor the queenly pine,
Nor lady of the wood may pair with mine.

These I remember, and that with the strain
Of Corydon, e'en Thyrsis strove in vain :
And from that time, if fancy may be free,
'Tis Corydon, still Corydon for me.

ECLOGUE THE EIGHTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

INVOKING the influence of Pollio, Virgil, as if repeating songs of Damon and Alphesibœus, represents, in Damon's, the grief and indignation of a cajoled and jilted lover: in the second, after Theocritus, but with successful issue, the incantations which bring home a truant husband.

*Scarce with her rosy fingers had the dawn
From glimmering heaven the veil of night withdrawn,
Or folded flocks were loose to browse anew
O'er mountain thyme or trefoil wet with dew,
When leaning sad an olive stem beside,
These, his last numbers, hapless Damon plied.*



*And folded flocks were loose to browse away
On mountain thyme or trefoil wet with dew.*

ECLOGUE THE EIGHTH.

PHARMACEUTRIA.

HEIFERS forgot the savoury mead to press,
And the quick lynx was mute and motionless :
Alphesibœus there with Damon sung,
And charm'd the lingering streams ; a feeblér tongue
Would now the well-remember'd strain prolong,
Damon's, and the Alphesibœan song.

Aid me, great Pollio, and though thou, afar,
Be passing wide Timavus' rocky bar,
Or coasting by the isles or by the strand
Of the Illyrian waters, yet command
My musings, and be still thy influence near.
Say, may I venture, in some riper year,
To sing thy exploits, thine, whose Muse alone
Divides with Sophocles the buskin'd throne ?
May I too, after long-maturing time,
For all the ages leave a stately rhyme ?
Those earlier notes, which trembled on my tongue
Were at no less than Pollio's bidding sung :
With thee my Muse began, with thee shall end :
Suffer sweet verse with sterner things to blend ;
And let this ivy round thy temples creep,
Though laurels intertwine and nations weep.

Scarce with her rosy fingers had the dawn
From glimmering heaven the veil of night withdrawn,
And folded flocks were loose to browse anew
O'er mountain thyme or trefoil wet with dew,
When leaning sad an olive stem beside,
These, his last numbers, hapless Damon plied.

“ Rise, Lucifer, draw forth the lagging day,
While I, deceived, lament the fickle play
Of plighted Nisa’s treachery ; implore
Thus dying, thus in my extremest hour,
The ever unpropitious gods, and plain
With this my reed, in sad Mænalian strain.

Whispers, and speaking pines, and a shrill grove
Hath Mænalus ; he hears the warbled love
Of shepherds, listens to the voice of Pan,
Who bade the idle reeds discourse with man :
In them the panting Syrinx breathes again,
In thee, my pipe, and our Mænalian strain.

Nisa is given to Mopsus—can forswear
Old loves for Mopsus !—now who need despair ?
For such as he when good men are betray’d,
What minnock may not hope to win a maid ?
Already griffins mate with mares, and soon
The timorous doe will leave her brake at noon
To share among the hounds the kennel-bowl.
The doe breaks cover ! let the goat-skins roll !
To kennel both ! I hear the ringing noise !
Scatter your walnuts to the scrambling boys :
Cut the new nuptial torches, bridegroom : see !
The guests are there : go, crown the revelry.
For thee in gay procession, they bring home
A bride : the mystic hour is almost come
When glimmering Hesperus leaves Cæta’s chain.
Be blithe, my reed, be blithe, Mænalian strain !

And you, false Nisa, level with his worth
And meetly mated, everything on earth
Contemns ; flocks, carols, faithful loves. But no !
Perhaps my beard was rough, unclipp’d or so :
My brows too shaggy ; and the gods have grown
Careless of vows, you deem, changing to stone
Like you. Of maidens ever light and vain
Play, play, my pipe, the old Mænalian strain.

Little I thought me, from that hour undone,
Though but a child, when, in the morning sun,

(Foul weather may the fairest mornings bring),
 I saw you, with my mother, gathering
 The dewy apples from our orchard side,
 And ran to help, and would not be denied.
 Scarcely for me twelve summers had come round ;
 Tip-toe I reach'd for you, or with a bound,
 The crackling boughs : alas ! the boy was crazed,
 And loved the small slight girl. Ah, how I gazed,
 How languish'd ; how the luckless fantasy
 Carried me quite away, and now I die !
 Of changeling hearts and faces that can feign,
 Breathe, fragile reeds, the old Mænalian strain.

Now know I what Love is ; no stripling he
 Of human kindred : him wild Rhodope,
 Tmarus or farthest Garamantes bore ;
 Upon the flinty crags engender'd. Pour
 Strange notes, my pipe, and shrill, the boy must reign
 And revel. Swell the wild Mænalian strain.

Was Love more pitiless or she who stood
 With hands discolour'd in her children's blood ?
 And could the prompting of the winged boy
 In jealous fury move you to destroy
 Your own ? What natural pulses beat in you ?
 No seething herbs their tender limbs renew.
 For them let the sad intermitting strain
 Like murmurs of the fitful South complain.

Now, scared by bleating sheep, let the wolf scour,
 Tamarisk drop amber or Narcissus flower
 On alder, oaks with ripe pomegranates bend,
 And screech-owls with the tuneful swan contend :
 Be Tityrus the Orpheus of our woods,
 With dolphins the Arion of the floods.
 Arion's harp might lull the deep once more,
 A wave scarce broken on the listening shore ;
 But hitherward Arion's harp were vain
 As thou, poor oat, and our Mænalian strain.

Beneath the sky what now remains for me ?
 Darkness and light be mingled, land and sea :

Farewell, ye woods. This burden shall I throw,
Myself my bane, from yon ærial brow
Of jutting headland? Rock'd upon the deep,
No dreams of Nisa would disturb my sleep:
Take this last present of a dying swain,
My reeds farewell!—Farewell Mænalian strain.”

Thus Damon: the deep notes responsive sung,
May roll but from Alpheſibœus’ tongue.
Pierian Maids, we are not equal all
To every theme, but you can best recall
What you inspired: O help me to renew,
As best I may, the strains he learn’d of you.

When long her Daphnis his return delay’d.
Thus Amaryllis’ mistress bade her maid.

“Now bring the water: with this coil unwound,
Of woollen fillets, bind the altars round:
Kindle fat vervain, choicest frankincense,
That far as sacred spells their power dispense,
I may try, even thus, to turn and move
The tardy senses of my wedded love.
And now I call him, for all else is right:
Daphnis, begin thy dark sojourn to-night:
They can reach far who beckon thee to come,
And warbled rites unheard attract thee home.

Magic has drawn the very moon from heaven;
When Circe sang, Ulysses’ mates were driven
Transform’d before her rod, and rightly versed,
Oft in the mead the chilly snake is burst.
By gentler art and soft desire o’ercome,
Draw from the town, my song, draw Daphnis home.

And first I wind about thee these three threads,
Diverse with triple colours: then, it needs
That thus, three times, I bear thy effigy
Round both the altars, for divinity
Unequal numbers please. Now, fasten next,
My Amaryllis, in three knots perplexed,
The triple hues: now, Amaryllis, now!

And murmur as you tie them, 'Even so
I bind the chains of Venus.' Daphnis, come!
Draw from the town, my song, draw Daphnis home.

As in the self-same fire this thing of clay
Grows hard, but the wax puppet melts away,
So for my slighted love may Daphnis yearn,
Dissolving; I, less ductile in my turn.
Now strew the salted cake; with bitumen
The crackling laurel burn, and now again
As me the wicked Daphnis burns, I cast
These burning sprigs on Daphnis: he, at last,
Soft as his trickling double will become,
Yet little guess how we have drawn him home.

Me what a quest the roving boy has cost!
As when the dam her firstling calf has lost,
She wanders from the mountains to the strand,
Her cloven traces printing all the sand.
But now may such a phrenzy Daphnis move,
As drives some heifer lowing through the grove,
In tangled fells to seek, or caverns hoar,
And seek in vain, her slaughter'd paramour:
Till, on the grass, by some brook side at last,
Her weary weight she, overtoil'd, has cast;
Forgets the stall, nor lifts her panting side,
Though night set in, or weather-change betide.
So Daphnis madden, nor may I be found
In foolish fondness quick to salve the wound.
Yet I relent,—yes, bid the wand'rer come,
My verse,—yes, bid the wicked Daphnis home!

And lo! these garments which he, faithless, left,
Dear pledges of himself, their subtle weft
Whoever wove it thus, a coil hath spun
To snare their owner, and these rites begun,
Demand these weeds: I give them thee, O earth,
Buried beneath his very threshold: worth
The burying, for these pledges owe me then
My Daphnis, and the boy will come again.
While yet the moon is up I bid thee come;
To-night, my magic, tole the wanderer home.

These herbs and this weird venom, cull'd afar
In Pontus, it was Mœris bade me pair,
And with due murmurs mingle: still the most
Medicinal thrive upon that haunted coast.
With these have I seen Mœris make the green
And riper crops change places: I have seen
And more than once have seen him, as he stood,
Change to a wolf, then hide him in the wood:
And while the troubled moon shrunk in and set,
Th' earth trembled, and the starless heaven was jet
With such as I am crumbling in my hand,
Could he the sad and shadowy past command
At will, and while my senses crept with dread,
From a deep sepulchre call up the dead.

Now go without, into the dusky air;
These ashes, Amaryllis, carry there;
And standing backward to the current, throw
Into the running stream: scatter them so:—
Backwards,—over your head—but then beware
That you look not behind you! May I snare
And cage him thus? But what for any charm,
Or any god cares he? Will he grow warm
For these dull ashes? Daphnis, Daphnis, come!
Stir thee, my magic, tole the traitor home.

But see!—Ere we could carry them abroad,
How the live embers, of their own accord,
Circle the altars with a tremulous flame.
'Tis good—the omen good, and with the same
Something is stirring;—what, I know not.—Hark!
Why does quick Hylas on the threshold bark?
Can I believe it, or do those who love
Frame themselves dreams of waking bliss? Remove
The altars; cease ye songs and labour'd charms:
I shall not long stand thus with empty arms:
I know his footfall—how he speeds him home!
Well sped, it is my very Daphnis come!”

*And while the troubled moon shrunk in and set,
Th' earth trembled, and the starless heaven was jet,
With such as I am crumbling in my hand,
Could he the sad and shadowy past command
At will, and while my senses crept with dread,
From a deep sepulchre call up the dead.*



*while the troubled moon shrunk in and set.
'th' earth trembled, and the starless heav'n was jet.*

ECLOGUE THE NINTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

MÆRIS, on his way to Mantua, with a present of kids for the soldier who has expelled him from his farm, tells Lycidas how narrowly Menalcas had escaped death, and sings fragments of his verse as they walk along.

When Virgil went to take possession of his patrimony restored to him by Octavius, he swam for his life to escape from the centurion whom he found still in possession: he then appealed successfully, this Eclogue perhaps assisting, and was reinstated. Here in the character of Menalcas, whose song is given by Mæris, he pleads for Mantua; suggesting to Varus the return of grateful verse, and complimenting the greater power on the apotheosis of Julius Cæsar.

Himself thrust out, Mæris, in various commentary, the slave, bailiff, tenant, father of Virgil, deplores the outrage of the veterans upon a friendly territory, where they seized the estates and drove away the land-holders.

ECLOGUE THE NINTH.

MÆRIS.

LYCIDAS. MÆRIS.

LYCIDAS.

GOOD Mæris, whither fare you with your load;
To Mantua town, for you are on the road?

MÆRIS.

O Lycidas, I live—live yet,—but grieve
For such a wrong as I could not conceive;
That a brute soldier might, with stronger arm,
Shoulder himself into our little farm,
And thrust me headlong:—settle there, and say,
“Begone old swains, old tenants, for to-day
All this is mine.” Thus broken and foredone,
Ill fortune everything beneath the sun
Reversing, what should I do now, but bear
These kids to him, if, haply, he may wear
Toward gentler dealing? But ’tis understood
Such gifts to such will seldom come to good.

LYCIDAS.

Yet surely, as I heard the tale, ’twas this:
That your admired Menalcas, who amiss
Could never sing, had sung to purpose now
In ears of power, and, to a rood or so,
Recover’d all; thence, where the mountain spine
Descends with many a steep or soft incline,
As far as to the water, and the head
Of that scathed beech tree, erst so nobly spread.

MÆRIS.

Rumour was generous, and so went the tale;
But our songs, Lycidas, as much avail
With the brute iron of conquest, as they say
The murmur of Chaonian pigeons may
With pouncing eagles; so that from a bough
Of hollow holm, had the sinister crow
Not warn'd us, timely warn'd us to forbear
All new contention, nor your Mæris here
Had stood to talk with you this day, nor might
Menalcas have escaped to see its light.

LYCIDAS.

And can such wickedness be found in men?
Alas! how nearly ravish'd from us then,
Menalcas, was the solace of thy song,
With thee the singer. Ah! who then among
These hills, had sung the Nymphs; who strewn the ground
With flowers; or shades of mournful cypress wound
About the fountain-heads: or given again
With simple-seeming mastery, the strain
I lately heard, when we both sat beside
Our charming Amaryllis; words I tried
Listening with greedy ear to steal from you,
And deftly thus, if memory serve me true?

“Feed these, these ewe-goats for me while away,
Good Tityrus; I make no idle stay:
And from the brow, when they have cropp'd their fill,
Drive to the fountain-heads beneath the hill:
And while about it, you had best beware
If roving loose, that great he-goat be there,
The captain of the herd, lest you be torn;
Quickly he turns, and butts with strenuous horn.”

MÆRIS.

This rather, which I heard, though incomplete,
Menalcas e'en to Varus' self repeat:—

“ If native Mantua may still be ours,
 Mantua, too near alas! the smoking towers
 Of lost Cremona, then our swans of song
 Stately my Varus’ name shall bear along
 The ages, and a love-enkindled line
 Translate thee to the stars in verse like thine.”

LYCIDAS.

Sing on, nor my attentive ear refuse;
 So may your swarms avoid the Corsic yews;
 So, fed with Cytisus, your heifers fill
 Their teeming udders. Me too, if they will
 Avouch it, have the Muses, for the worse
 A songster made: I also have my verse,
 And shepherds call me poet; but I seem,
 Incredulous of their praise, only to dream,
 And far unworthy yet of Varus’ ear
 Or Cinna’s; for my verse adventuring there,
 Might fare much like a simple countryman’s
 Lost gander, cackling among tuneful swans.
 But sing: sing on, good Mœris.

MÆRIS.

’Tis what I
 Am now about, with myself, silently
 Conning it over, Lycidas; to train
 Each errant word into its place again;
 Lest phrase or measure, by disuse or time,
 Be lost; and it is no ignoble rhyme.

“ Rise, Galatea, leave those briny caves;
 What merry-making is there with the waves
 And wind? Here blushes all the purple spring;
 Soft airs and sweeter waters murmuring;
 The moon is fann’d by breezes from the main,
 Or transient vapour falls in silver rain;
 And all about the streams, the living ground
 Pours forth innumerable flowers: the sound

Of birds is in the amorous air, and bees,
 And bleatings from the downs drowsily please.
 Come! and we swifter than the startled fawn,
 Will scatter from high grass the dews of dawn,
 For savoury game, among the inmost fern:
 Then, to our goats at milking-time return
 O'er breezy heather-bells and slopes of vine;
 The cream-bowl set and in our cave recline,
 (Its brows with poplar shaded, watch the West),
 And timely, with the sun, together rest.
 Leave at their will the tossing waves to roar,
 Leap from the foam and rule the genial shore."

LYCIDAS.

Watching my flocks upon the upland there,
 What was't I heard you through the listening air,
 Singing alone, one starry summer night?
 The measure I remember, if I might
 But hit the words.

MÆRIS.

'Twas thus my music dared.
 "O Daphnis, why observe with such regard
 The ancient Zodiac in each rising sign?
 See, kindling yonder, a new planet shine,
 Nor less than Dionean Cæsar's star
 There moving with procession regular
 Command our trust: the star, the genial eye
 That should rejoice the glebe with luxury
 Of laughing harvests. He will bless the soil;
 And vineyards o'er our teeming hills erewhile
 Gathering their colour, you may graft new rows
 Of pears; your progeny will shake the boughs."

I thus, but when Menalcas comes again,
 Ofttimes will he, and in a nobler vein
 The choicest verse repeat to you or sing.
 Alas! Old age bears hard on everything;
 On memory most, for now song after song

*Then, to our goats at milking-time return
O'er breezy heather-bells and slopes of vine ;
The cream-bowl set and in our cave recline,
(Its brows with poplar shaded, watch the West),
And timely, with the sun, together rest.*



*The cream-bowl sat and in our cave reclined.
(Its brows with poplar shaded, watch the West).
And timely, with the sun, together rest*

Slips by me nigh forgotten. Once so strong,
 E'en voice itself is failing me : alas !
 The wolves have first seen Mœris : to this pass
 Have youth-dreams come : but in those times of love,
 When all was blithe within and bright above,
 How often have we sat, neglecting time,
 Eager to modulate the storied rhyme.
 Intent we sat, nor would for sun-down stir ;
 But on the scented eves of midsummer,
 With pipe and carol fill the rosy air,
 Till, unperceived, the stars were glimmering there.

LYCIDAS.

Excuse but quickens my desire to hear,
 With such enchantment lingering on my ear :
 And now th' unruffled water stays for you
 Becalm'd, and lull'd is every breath that blew
 Of murmuring wind, and we are midway come
 Upon our journey, for Bianor's tomb
 From hence is just beginning to be seen.
 Here, where the husbandmen the lusty green
 Are pruning, here, my Mœris, for awhile
 Lay down your kids and a short hour beguile
 With song : we shall have time enough to gain
 The city ; or if we surmise that rain
 May gather with the nightfall, let us take
 Once more our staves in hand, walk on, and make
 The road less tedious with our verse ; and I
 Myself will bear your burden willingly,
 If but your carol may abridge our way
 To yon dim battlements and turrets grey.

MÆRIS.

Urge me no more, good Lycidas ; be scann'd
 At once the business that I have in hand.
 We shall sing better, this dissension past,
 When vex'd Menalcas takes his own at last.

ECLOGUE THE TENTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

VIRGIL consoles Cornelius Gallus for the inconstancy of his beloved Lycoris.

Retired, in Arcadia, he is addressed by Apollo and the rural deities, but is shaken by the conflict of passion with reason.

Cornelius himself was a poet, having written elegies, it is said, and translated the poems of Euphorion. Hence the force of the question, 'Neget quis carmina Gallo?'

*Pan came, Arcadian tetrarch ever good ;
I myself saw him, glowing as he stood,
With wall-wort berries, crimson'd like the West.*



*Pan came, Arcadian tetrarch ever good ;
I myself saw him, glowing as he stood .
With wall-wort berries crimson'd like the West .*

ECLOGUE THE TENTH.

GALLUS.

YIELD, Arethuse, to him this latest song,
It is for Gallus we our notes prolong,
Mournful and few, yet prompt if he but need
The verse : a verse Lycoris' self may read !
Euphorion's equal must not be denied ;
So, under the Sicilian waters glide,
And never Doris taint thy glassy spring.
Begin : the anxious loves of Gallus sing,
While the goats, browsing, press the thymy ground ;
We sing not to the deaf, the woods resound.

What lawns detain'd you, Naiads, or what grove,
When he was perishing of slighted love ?
From him indeed, no steeps of Pindus grey,
Or cleft Parnassus, very long might stay
Your ready feet, nor Aganippe's well :
'Twas thereabouts he loved to dream and dwell :
And him their laurels, him their myrtles mourn :
Him, stretch'd beside a desert rock forlorn,
Mænalian pines and cold Lycæus wept.
Our very sheep, on yonder uplands kept,
Are coming round us ; haply they divine
Something at fault, nor as they can, decline
To share our grief ; nor thou the sheep disdain,
Sad poet, master of a nobler strain,
Nor let soft flutes nor reeds of Pan displease ;
For oft, with crook and wallet, flocks like these,
To breezy down or shadowy fountain-head
Even the beautiful Adonis led.

The shepherd came and the slow herdsmen, last
 Menalcas, wet with gathering winter mast :
 Their homely help was ready, if they knew
 Alas ! where balm for such a sorrow grew.
 Apollo came : he said, "Why rav'st thou thus
 For false Lycoris ? She, libidinous,
 Hies her to a new paramour, and goes
 Through bristling camps and ventures Alpine snows."
 Thither, as wont, with forest honours crown'd,
 His way the tutelary Silvan found,
 All weather-swarth'd, and with his flowering rod
 And full-blown lilies shaking as he trod.
 Pan came, Arcadian tetrarch ever good ;
 I myself saw him, glowing as he stood,
 With wall-wort berries, crimson'd like the West.
 "Is there no mean ?" he said, "and for the rest
 Love cares not : cruel Love no tears can sate,
 Nor rivulets the lust of meads abate,
 Wild-thyme of bees, of goats the sapling-sprays."

At last the lover spoke : we saw him raise,
 As waking from a dream, his languish'd head.
 "Yet, henceforth in your mountains, you," he said,
 "Arcadians, will in verse her name prolong
 With mine ; you, ever excellent in song ;
 And O ! how softly then these bones will rest,
 Our story by your plaintive reeds express'd.

Would, shepherds, that I had been bred with you,
 To tend the roving flock, a gatherer too
 Of the ripe vintages ; for then whoe'er
 Had been my passion, or Neæra fair,
 Or sun-brown Phillis, (what if she be brown ?
 Hyacinths are dark, and shadowy violets blown
 Refresh the glade) ; she had sat by my side
 Beneath the willows, or o'ercanopied
 With vine ; Phillis had gather'd wreaths for me,
 Neæra sung beneath a shady tree.

Here are cool fountains and soft meads and bowers,
 Lycoris : with but thee to crown the hours,

Pan came, Arcadian tetrarch ever good ;

[A newer version of the design at the beginning of this Eclogue.]



Pap came, Aradian tetrarch ever good;

Delectably a life-time I could waste.
 Now for the clash of iron, the trumpet-blast,
 The grapple! love hath harness'd me for war.
 But thou, alas! may I believe it? far
 From thy forsaken home, see'st nought around
 But Alps and snow, and like thy love, ice-bound,
 The scarcely flowing Rhine:—careless and bold,
 Without me and alone. May never cold
 Distress thee, wandering, nor the stony sleet,
 Nor rugged ice-tracks tear those dainty feet.

Enough: why heed it? Whither do I stray?
 Hence, moping fantasies: Despair, be gay!
 Better in listening ears to troll erelong
 To the Sicilian shepherd's reed, that song
 I made in verse of Chalcis. I am set;
 Resolved; no fickleness will turn me yet;
 Resolved the tangled forest to explore,
 Among the dens of savage beasts, and score
 My loves upon the bark of sapling groves:
 Slowly they grow; as tardily my loves.

Anon, methinks I hear the clamouring hounds:
 With many a quiver'd Nymph I sweep the bounds
 Of Mænalus, and chafe the startled boar.
 Shall we be tether'd by the frost, the roar,
 When Eurus drives the sleet, nor track the fawns
 With packs uncoupled, o'er Parthenian lawns?
 And now with racing winds the heights we sweep,
 Now, plunge to the resounding hollows deep:
 Cydonian arrows, if my mood be so,
 I scatter from a horny Parthian bow.
 Fool! as if these were medicines for love,
 Or man's extremity its god could move.

And now, nor light-foot Hamadryades,
 Nor verse itself, nor you, soft woodlands, please.
 Ye woods, in turn, farewell! Will any cost
 Or travail move him? In midwinter's frost
 Even if we drink of Hebrus, or endure
 Sithonian snows and numbing temperature:

Or when, upon the elm, the parching rind
Has shrunk, in Ethiopia if we bind
A sheep-cote, and each desert try by turns
For pasture, while the sun in Cancer burns,
Love will but tamper with the shaft he drove,
And we must yield to all-subduing Love."

Muses, let these suffice; your poet sung
Reclined all day the tender copse among,
And of lithe mallow-twigs a basket wove:
Weaving he sung, and bade the heifers rove.
Complete for him the sylvan rhyme and bear
In your own accents to Cornelius' ear.
Your graces that heroic name adorn
The more, with every moon that fills her horn;
With each my love is newly flourishing,
As alders bourgeon in the early spring.

But let us rise, for never voice was made,
Nor verse, more tuneful by a chilling shade,
To man distasteful and the ripening field:
Such, even junipers at nightfall yield.
Now pales the latest crimson of the West:
Gather yon batten'd herd, I bring the rest;
And then wind homeward in the dying light;
Homeward my goats, for Hesperus is bright.

ADAPTATIONS.

ECLOGUE I.

"You, Tityrus, at ease, carelessly laid"

*"On earth's fair bed beneath some sacred shade,
Amidst his equal friends, carelessly laid."*

COWLEY, *from the second Georgic.*

The cross-rhythm of the dactyl throws him loosely upon the grass,
and we see him there.

ECLOGUE IV.

"And lean and hearken for thy sov'reign voice."

"And leans and hearkens after it."

DONNE.

ECLOGUE VII.

"And sporting lambs among the glad light green:"

"Some very red, and some a glad light green."

CHAUCER, *of the trees in spring-time.*

ECLOGUE VIII.

"As when the dam her firstling calf has lost,"

From LUCRETIVS.

ECLOGUE X.

"—— we saw him raise,
As waking from a dream, his languish'd head."

"With languish'd head unpropt"

MILTON, *in Samson Agonistes*, verse 119.

NOTES.

ECLOGUE I.

“You, Tityrus,”

THAT difficulty concerning a dead and living fish which King Charles the Second propounded to the Royal Society, might have been a difficulty still, had no one questioned the fact; nor was the travail of those philosophers more arduous than ours is likely to be, in identifying the person represented by Tityrus, until it occurs to us that perhaps he represents nobody. What is really represented is the kindness, or rather the justice of Octavius in restoring his estate to Virgil, then in his prime, and this is done by the fiction of a like redress granted to an ancient shepherd.

But there is something more: the mention of liberty and of a time during which Tityrus had been farming unprofitably. There are Galatea and Amaryllis, who, if not assigned to allegory, “were doubtless,” says a learned commentator, “successive partners of the slave Tityrus.” But, if Tityrus was a slave, how came he by his estate; where was the purchase-money, seeing that he had not, until Galatea left him, begun to save even the “peculium,” which, according to the slave theory, was to purchase his freedom? Melibæus disposes of this in three words:—“*Tua rura manebunt.*”—“*Tua rura*”: emphatically, as Professor Conington puts it, they are “yours, and yours for ever.” So then, Tityrus was no slave after all, but a substantial grazier, farming his own freehold. His servitude, if any, must have been free labour to supply his wants during his expulsion by the veterans, about which the text is silent; and his liberty, either freedom from such need, or from the influence of Galatea.

But apart from allegory, there is, perhaps, a by-play glancing at public affairs and at the poet himself, which it is now impossible to trace: his words are two-edged, a single one is often an abridgment of many, and its meaning expands like the widening circle when a stone is thrown into the water.

Some have understood Tityrus to be a farm-slave or tenant of Virgil, as Mœris of Menalcas in the ninth Eclogue: but the cases are not parallel: Mœris owns a superior, Tityrus none. With the question whether Tityrus represents Virgil’s father, “retired leisure” may amuse himself in his “gardens.”

"Have we a distant hope; shall I at last
Return——?"

*En umquam patrios longo post tempore finis
Pauperis et tuguri congestum cæspite culmen,
Post aliquot mea regna videns mirabor aristas?*

In this passage, which has presented a choice of difficulties to every critic, from Servius to Professor Conington, is it far fetched to suppose that "mirabor" may partly glance at a certain strangeness in the first appearance of familiar scenes after long absence; making, while it lasts, a very curious impression, double and contradictory at the same moment? I remember it on returning to England after only two years of travel.

When Melibæus, in close contrast with the dispersion of the exiles through every climate, to the ends of the earth, asks if he shall ever return to his native borders, his cottage, his realm; I cannot but think that he is using the language of hope: that in this place, "en" strengthened by "umquam," expresses "desire joined with interrogation." Can we, with several annotators, believe the subject of wonder to be the waste and havoc during his absence? Had Melibæus asked, "Shall I ever return to wonder at the ruin of my farm?" Tityrus might have replied "Perhaps you had better not": had Melibæus expressed a hope to do so, his friend would have concluded that he had lost his wits with his estate. But the real matter of wonder is not far to seek in:—"mea regna": "Shall I wonder at my realms?" "realms" put rhetorically for estate or farm by a figure of amplification, denoting absolute possession, competence and enjoyment. "Wreck," in our idiom, would have been more suitable; some diminutive at any rate, if impoverishment were to be the object of wonder. Or are "realms" put for the happiness of returning to them? "Shall I live to wonder at my happiness at being restored to my patrimonial fields after years of poverty and exile?"

The "aristæ," what botanist shall class? They are a genus in themselves: corn to the eye and nettles to the touch. If they stand for time, for harvests let us look at the produce. "Shall I ever, after a long time return;—after some years?" For those who can perceive the "bathos," here it is; although, apart from the context and from rhetoric, any man, as professor Martyn observes, may call some years of banishment a long time, with the loss of his estate.

In some way or other "post aliquot aristas" must be uncoupled, as a weak iteration, from "longo post tempore": may it be ventured thus? "After wandering perhaps to the ends of the earth, shall I ever, after a long time return, and, (once more tilling my own land), wonder, after a few harvests, at its renewed fertility, and at my own happiness after such reverses?" I believe this to be a new rendering, and am the more inclined to distrust it: but the dame may venture her simples when the patient is given over.

If the "aristæ" be taken literally for beards or ears of corn, they are

either too many or too few : too few to present a pleasing image, too indefinite to mark decay. We do not express a man's poverty by saying that he is worth some money.

"Yet stay with us to-night, our pens will keep
Your goats, and here you may securely sleep."

Verse has no appeal from its first impression ; therefore I have omitted the "green leaf" upon which Melibœus is invited to sleep, as hinting rheumatism to Northern ears, and a spare hospitality. With the ancients this might pass, in Doric phrase, for a comfortable bed ; leaves, with them, often serving the purpose of our feathers : yet loose, and in the open air, they might in Italy, sometimes be the best accommodation. Travelling there at midnight in a hot summer, I have seen a whole family fast asleep and settled between their cottage and the road, upon no leaves whatever.

ECLOGUE II.

"Of mine a thousand ewes are wand'ring o'er
Sicilia's mountains ;—"

Corydon is, at one and the same time, a clown (*rusticus*), a servant or farm slave ; is wealthy in cattle, owns a thousand sheep, and is too poor to compete in presents with Iolas : a meal of incongruities plentiful enough to quiet all such critics as are said to "snarl most when there are fewest bones." Virgil knew, quite as well as ourselves, that probability has its limit ; but his eye is upon Theocritus, and here, reaching for Hellenic flowers, he breaks the hedge and leaves logic among the nettles.

"Hoary with tender down, the melting peach"

The choice of translation lying between the peach or apricot and the quince, there can be little doubt as to which was intended by Virgil ; nor is it unlikely that peaches had found their way to Rome several years before they were generally known in Italy.

ECLOGUE VI.

"And then from the reluctant skies withdrew."

Reluctant, because nightfall, at the setting of Vesper, would stop the song to which they listened. By the like setting, Milton, in *Lycidas*, limits the "rural ditties."

"Oft till the star that rose, at evening, bright,
Toward heav'n's descent had slop'd his west'ring wheel.
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute."

ECLOGUE VIII.

"Say, may I venture in some riper year
To sing thy exploits——?"

Virgil more than once gratified his warlike friends by enquiring whether he might one day venture to make their exploits the subject of a poem; but he took good care never to attempt it:—

"——— Laudato ingentia rura :
Exiguum colito."

He knew his art too well. Many years must elapse before events can be seen in their just proportion; prejudice and passion and surprise having passed away, and accident from essence.

The mind of a great poet is thrown back into antiquity, whence he symbolizes the present: sometimes, in various mood, refreshing attention or awakening sympathy by allusion to passing affairs; adding mystery by these flashes of the hour, to the twilight of an ideal past: but he who lays his story in the present, is little likely to grasp it, for contact is not vision, and he has no vantage ground of observation; but is himself an atom of his subject, a fly upon the axle.

ECLOGUE IX.

"E'en voice itself is failing me: alas!
The wolves have first seen Mæris:——"

It was believed in ancient Italy that a man lost his voice for a time, if a wolf caught sight of him before he saw the wolf.

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